



33 Sardonic

I can't forget


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TIFFANY THAYER

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCING 33 SARDONICS	9
THE LAST OF THE STORIES <sup>41</sup>	25
RUDYARD KIPLING	
THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO	39
EDGAR ALLAN POE	
THE SPHINX WITHOUT A SECRET	46
OSCAR WILDE	
THE BEARS	52
WSEWOLOD MICHAILOVICH GARSHIN	
THE YOUNG IMMIGRUNTS	70
RING LARDNER	
ON A DAY LIKE THIS	86
BEN HECHT	
TEN-CENT WEDDING RINGS	90
BEN HECHT	
TO BERT WILLIAMS	93
BEN HECHT	

PERMUTATIONS AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES	98
ALDOUS HUXLEY	
THE RIGHT TO TAKE ONESELF OFF	123
AMBROSE BIERCE	
THE FABLE OF THE ALL-NIGHT SEANCE AND THE LIMIT THAT CEASED TO BE	127
GEORGE ADE	
A NEW PLEASURE	132
PIERRE LOUYS	
MORLVERA	145
SAKI	
EXILE'S LETTER	150
EZRA POUND	
THE METAMORPHOSIS	153
AGNOLO FIRENZUOLA	
PROLOGUE TO BOOK FOUR	161
FRANCOIS RABELAIS	
THE HISTORY OF THE AMOURS OF EURIALUS AND LUCRETIA	174
POPE PIUS II ("Aeneas Silvius" Piccolomini)	
THE GRAVE ROBBERS	190
ANONYMOUS	

TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
THE FAITHFUL AMULET	195
W. C. MORROW	
ENDLESS RIVER	204
FELIX RIESENBERG	
THE SAND-MAN	224
E. T. W. HOFFMANN	
REGRET	259
GUY DE MAUPASSANT	
THE ROBE OF PEACE	265
O. HENRY	
A MEDIAEVAL ROMANCE	270
MARK TWAIN	
THE DERELICT	277
H. M. TOMLINSON	
LITTLE OLD NEW YORK	283
HARRY LEON WILSON	
THE LITTLE RED KITTEN	313
LAFCADIO HEARN	
THE BLACK CUPID	316
LAFCADIO HEARN	
THE BEATIFIC VISION	319
J. S. FLETCHER	

RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER	323
-----------------------	-----

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THE PEARL OF LOVE	352
-------------------	-----

H. G. WELLS

VOX POPULI	357
------------	-----

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM

THE VALIANT	361
-------------	-----

HOLWORTHY HALL and ROBERT MIDDLEMASS

## INTRODUCING 33 SARDONICS



THE HURDY-CURDY must play flat to please me. A grind-organ sounding notes truly, in key, is an unthinkable abomination. Let the instrument (if the musical among you will permit the term) screech along—at its sourest I wince, with pleasure. A chuckle rises without bidding, a genuine physical reflex closes one eye and furls my brows like a pair of lace pants in a breeze, the while my mouth curls, one-sidedly, in “a smile called wry”. (The phrase is Selma Robinson’s, vide her *City Child*.)

I like to wince—and that is no idiosyncrasy. Who does not rub his bruises, to make them hurt just a little? In letters, I think we are a lot of dogs, barking up professionals to lick our psychic sores. We have even invented a label for this treatment, calling our little literary pains, “poetic irony”.

So, bring on the tuneless hurdy-gurdy; the dancing bear, the drunken peasants, the extrovert Russian merchant to scatter coins amongst us—and hand me up my flute. We’ll play at Petrouchka! You folks are at the fair (slumming, of course), and I’ll be the *focusnik*, the puppeteer showman. Because—only Stravinsky could have orchestrated this book, and even as the acts, characters, puppets, men, women and animals perform for you in sequence, you will hear the high, thin, plaintive wail of Petrouchka his call. Yes, even as the dolls stumble and pitch through the looking glass toward you, bleeding sawdust from wounds made with daggers “of boiled leather gilded”, the despairing cries of their souls, seeking to be, will echo familiarly in your skulls, and their wraiths will leer like gargoyles through the fabric of your dreams, haunting you forever with faces you know but cannot name.

Aye, come to my fair, and leave—to enjoy a perpetual hangover, -- vivid, bitter anaphasia; for the name you will be unable to recall

will be yours, and the unidentified faces will be your family's, your friends', your own.

Arranging a vaudeville of other men's turns is not, primarily, my business. (What my primary business is need be no part of this argument.) So that when the proposal was made that I should crawl under the toga, mantle, Inverness, of the former Alexander Woolcott, I was aware that the figurative garment would fit me no more snugly than a real one from the same wardrobe. True, I have come down the years beating the drum for Charles Fort and a few others, but that enthusiasm has been in the nature of religion, a perverse but nonetheless holy crusade, and rather more expensive to me in time and pelf than the simple term "altruistic" conveys. Asking me to play the anthologist was a challenge to my moral code (the only luxury I was able to salvage intact in the retreat from Hollywood, 1936).

My moral code is a thing of beauty and a tremendous item in the overhead forever. It is the moral code of the bookseller as contrasted with that of the publisher. Booksellers are all poor, noble fellows condemned by a worm—nay! a serpent—in their gizzards, spleens or brains to stand before their booths at the fair, crying up intellectual fruits which the drunken peasants and extrovert merchants do not want and will not have, and which only you who come aslumping ever buy. Whereas publishers, with the possible exception of him whose brand is on the hide of this volume, are all rich bastards who batten on the bones of genius which litter the "public domain". You may see them at night, ravening in the shadows of the gallows at "21", of the gibbet at the Stork, their fangs bared for each other's throats, their pig-eyes gleaming in the neon light, as they wait for the succulent corpses swaying above them to fall as the hemp rots.

I am a publisher . . . vide *Who's Who in America*: "T. T. . . . owner and propr. Old Wine Press Pubs., N. Y. City, since 1932."

Ever since 1920, when I saw my first "Mosher", I have planned to issue a series of bibelots of my own designing, beautifully macabre, "decadent", as they used to say in the '90s, books bound in the skin of Lady Dilke and her sisters, for the libraries of Des Esseintes, Lord Henry, Theodore Gumbriel Junior, B.A., and of a

man or two I have loved—Hans Hanke, Tom Handy (women have no taste in these matters): and the sardonics in this book are some I have marked off, as I read them, to print in that subtly poisonous series. So that when this role of Town Crier to the damned was proposed to me, the props were all ready, and only a slight adjustment of conscience was necessary to bring me to the pitch.

The only problem was routining the program, and for aid in this I turned to anthologies on my shelves, to Woolcott's Readers and the ponderous tomes of the learned Dr. Carl Van Doren. By comparison to these, my poor figure—of a canvas show-booth at the fair, even with ballyhoo banners added—becomes a flimsy thing indeed. For the Readers are edifices, monumental structures of classic, imposing grandeur, laid stone upon stone with permanence in view. That trowel at work amidst aesthetic rubble could have been inspired by nothing less than the pyramids—or a mausoleum, perhaps. And Dr. Van Doren—one of the very few men remaining alive who can identify capital "L" Literature on sight—takes a pattern even more immemorial, more primal, quite cosmic in fact. His anthologies follow a segment of an arc of a spiral, the same spiral that Time itself traces on the way to eternity. That is to say, he arranges the stories chronologically, in order of their composition.

Not to despise these examples set by practiced, proficient journeymen among repossessed materials, I too choose a model: not cosmic like Van Doren's, nor architectural like Woolcott's, but from nature, something living, from the animal kingdom. Our entertainment in its entirety—or, at least, my enthusiasm for it—fills in the silhouette of a saddle horse—a Trojan saddle horse, if you like, to give it a classic touch. In a word, the program is purposely swaybacked.

The first item is my favorite, the last, my second choice. Piece number two from the front of the book, third-best, to my way of thinking; the penultimate tale, fourth-best: and so on, until the middle is reached. There—if anywhere—the reader, like a rider, gets sore.

The advantages of this arrangement are numerous. For one thing, you will scarcely have reached dead center—where a former



Pope of Rome spreads his Odour of Sanctity through the vale—before the quality of the merchandise begins to improve. Your first step up from Pius II is a charming bit by that prolific fellow, Anonymous; and ascent is steady from that point on to the whirlwind finish which will flail your heart to jelly or you have no heart to flail. A further advantage of this shuttle-cock, front-to-back, back-to-front arrangement is that if you prefer the tennis matches or the six-day bike races to attending the fair (or if this Petrouchka metaphor has now become too muddled for you), you can give your neck the same type of exercise simply by following my preference as if it were the ball, or the boy pedalling for your dough. I shall not introduce the sardonics in that order, however, but beginning with the first, just as they come.

RUDYARD KIPLING: *Last of the Stories*. The fashion is never to mention Kipling without a mild word of apology for being familiar with his work at all. This is a reaction from those early days when he was the literary atom-bomb. Anything or anybody attaining such heights as he did must, in an orthodox universe, eventually come a little down. He had no other way to go. But it is not in conformity to this current, ephemeral practice of detracting from Kipling's merit, that I qualify his number one position. This is my favorite short story, but Kipling is far from my favorite writer. In fact, I always think first of Rabelais in connection with this story, and it is only with an effort that I make myself realize that the Rabelais in my mind was put there by Kipling, with Kipling's words in his mouth. However, my affinity for the yarn is not predicated upon either man, nor even upon the skill of the story's telling. It is simply that this is a writers' story—THE story of stories for the scribbling brotherhood—containing the best, soundest, only possible advice to writers "to their need".

I have read the tale so often I can almost recite it from memory, but the goose-flesh never fails when I come upon those "Three Laws" again and again: Three Laws very difficult to obey.

EDGAR ALLAN POE: *Cask of Amontillado*. Old hat? Well, it's better than your new one. Mrs. Thayer objected to the inclusion of this story, on the ground that it was commonplace "on the air". If that is true, I can only rejoice that radio listeners are

sometimes treated to so fine a thing. In all probability thousands of them never would have encountered it otherwise.

.OSCAR WILDE: *Sphinx Without a Secret*. This little story reveals a profound truth, and it took a sissy to express it. He-men, with immensely greater opportunities to observe the gambit in action, perhaps daily, not only muff the point entirely but are ready to take off their glasses and let you have it, in robust, muddle-headed contradiction of the facts set forth.

I remember one blonde, so typical that she might be used as a case history in support of the Wilde thesis. I hesitate to generalize about her infancy, since she had passed the age of consent when I met her, but I stake my reputation as an expert in boudoir libido that she never drew an honest breath after her eighteenth birthday. What brings her to mind especially in connection with this story is the way she—fairly intelligent, and educated to within an inch of her life—consistently mistook masculine confusion for admiration, personal interest, a reflection of her powers for fascination. No—that is not quite right. She did not mistake the man's puzzlement for devotion or enslavement to herself, she was content with—yea, preened herself upon—the poor bloke's search for reason, rationality in her behavior, as if that search were indeed evidence of romantic love.

Do you follow me? All he wanted to know was WHY she acted that way. He didn't give a damn, but he wanted a reason—the truth Oscar Wilde gives it him.

WSEWOLOD MICHAILOVICH GARSHIN: *The Bears*. If you saw an old, old Russian film, *Potemkin*, you may recall a rebellion of the Imperial Russian Navy pictured therein. You may also recall one highly impressive scene of booted Russian—marines, I think—in white uniforms, stampeding on a gigantic, colossal flight of enormously wide marble stairs.

Garshin, the author of this piece, committed suicide by pitching himself head foremost from the top of those stairs in 1887. He was 33 years old. He had written only about twenty stories. *The Bears* is my favorite of these.

RING LARDNER: *Young Immigrunts*. Perhaps this piece from the *Saturday Evening Post*, 1920, is not as funny as *Alibi Ike*. It has the virtue of being less well known, is not included in any

collection of Lardner's work which I have seen, and thus may be new to you. I read it when it was printed in the *Post* and I have never forgotten my glee.

I was a reporter for Mr. Hearst, in Chicago, at the time, and the trek described in the story marked the end of Lardner's feature column on the sports page of the *Tribune*. That column was frequently based upon the doings of the Lardner children. One I recall with especial delight was laid at the breakfast table. A son appeared wearing one of Ring's neckties, and a younger one demanded that it be handed over to him. Louder and more peremptory with each request, he finally choked: "If you don't give me that necktie I'll kill you—I think."

BEN HECHT: On a *Day Like This*. Hardly anybody needs to be told how I feel about Ben Hecht. His *Erik Dorn* was my Magna Charta. I read it first when I was 19, and learned from its dazzling phrases that a man is privileged to put his thoughts on paper if he is able. Until that time, the business of story telling had seemed to me to have no connection whatever with the writer's thoughts, with his views, his attitudes. Dickens was the novel—O. Henry the short story. A man wrote like one or the other of them or did not get his work published. At the time, Dreiser's *Genius* and Cabell's *Jurgen* were both in the toils of the censors. Yet, here was a man who said things about life which I had observed to be true. He wrote them down beautifully and they were printed. . . . After that, all I needed was practice.

Ben was writing a daily column on the *Chicago Daily News*. This—and the next two pieces—appeared there, run of the mine.

*Ten Cent Wedding Rings*  
To Bert Williams

ALDOUS HUXLEY: *Permutations Among the Nightingales*. This highly artificial, overly mannered, completely delightful piece contains a liberal education for the stay-at-home, if he or she will only take it. With singular and pertinacious perversity, the Right People of the earth persist in the pretense that such work as this is trivial, light, mere pastime; whereas—in good sooth—this small parcel contains all the eternal verities, plus ample commentary. In

the posturing of these puppets you may read the whole of life. There is not, in the entire canon of philosophy, a single grain of truth to be added. Pundits can and do spin the matter out, padding it unmercifully, and repeating the same observations in terms of mathematical equations and in a thousand other jargons invented to conceal the simple fact that they are earning a living, but all that they add, the lot of them—Schopenhauer, Kant, Emerson, Einstein, Nostradamus, Santayana, the pack—is the weight of their nomenclatures and not one tittle more. If you know these permutations among the nightingales with all their implications, this world has nothing more to teach you. There isn't any more.

AMBROSE BIERCE: *Right to Take Oneself Off*. I have no favorite Bierce short story. His tales are like the little girl with the curl: and among those which are very very good—one is quite as good as another. Yet, I could scarcely gather together so much that is aloe without at least one drop of "Bitter Bierce". Not *The Damned Thing*, surely, although I'm told Arnold Gingrich liked it well enough to reprint it in *Esquire*. No . . . I choose this essay, because it treats of a subject I "collect"—suicide—and, therefore, it has personal interest for me. I hope you enjoy it, too.

GEORGE ADE: *Fable of The All-Night Seance and The Limit That Ceased to Be*. As in the case of Bierce, one has hardly any choice among the good things of George Ade. One Fable is just as delightful as the next, and you should read them all. This is chosen for the subject matter, which is poker, an institution which has concerned me greatly ever since I found out that the deck could be put to other uses besides building houses on the floor.

PIERRE LOUYS: *A New Pleasure*. The success of this pretty story depends upon its denouement, so I won't even hint at its nature. What pleases me about it, particularly, is the simplicity of the observation, the almost obviousness of this truth which passes unremarked every day . . . *Voulez vous un çibish?*

SAKI: *Morlyera*. Here in America, we have had our Bierce, Ade and Lardner, our Mencken, Nathan and Twain, our B. L. T. and F. P. A.: but never, never could we have produced H. H. Munro, Saki.

Given time, a Wilde or even an Evelyn Waugh might grow here. Wodehouse, for example, could have lived on straw but for U. S. A., acclaim: but never, never could the land of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, of the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe, produce the story—*Morivera*. The quippiest quipster, this side, must stand in awe of this Scot. It is my misfortune to share this enthusiasm with the willom Christopher—wistopher. I'm sorry.

Friends—in spite of Morley's recommendation, Saki is top-notch reading; and this tiny thing exemplifies his charm. I plant parsley for *Morivera*.

EZRA POUND: *Exile's Letter*. Coming to me in English words, this is the work of Ezra Pound. If it had some basis in ideograph, as the supplementary text indicates was the case, that Chinese original may or may not have been poetry to its writer or to the person addressed. In its small way, this piece is like the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám. What we love in the larger work is Fitzgerald, pure and simple: in this, Pound. Regardless of what the heathens intended by their outlandish marks, in both cases masters of the English idiom have distilled some essential theretfrom into Occidentally comprehensible poetry of a very high order.

ANGNOLO FIRENZUOLA: *Metamorphosis*. By counting, you may verify that this is the fifteenth sardonic and since seventeen is the middle number between one and thirty-three, you are about to touch bottom. 'To make the feel to you toes as congenial as possible, I point out that this author was a monk—the "Benedictine Monk of Vallambrosa", which place is near Florence. He was the son of a Florentine magistrate put on the bench by Cosimo de Medici, one of that demagogue's political pawns.

By coincidence, the next story was also written by a sometime ecclesiast, the immortal Cure of Meudon. UNCOVER!—as Kipling says . . . And the next after that by a Pope. Please draw no conclusions from this grouping. It is innocent of guile.

The *Metamorphosis* is selected from a privately printed collection of Firenzuola's stories, nowadays seldom encountered and always priced at a premium. To be perfectly honest, Boccaccio has tales immeasurably superior (and Balzac too, in his *Contes*

Drolatiques), but both those authors are easily accessible—they are on your shelves right now—and so, to represent that genre with typica not unworthy, I choose what I hope will be new to you.

FRANÇOIS RABELLAIS: *Prologue to Book Four, 'Done out of the French by Mr. Motteux.'*

You had better stand back a little, because on this subject I am prone to slop over . . . That all the men ever born until he was, had been necessary, to create one such! That all the men born, since he died, have passed without creating such another! . . . Take Shakspeare, Goethe, Dante, Homer—take them all. Leave me only Papa Rabelais and I'm content.

One could dip in a hand anywhere and take out a sample which would suffice. The Prologue is here because it contains the great moral lesson of the lost hatchet, and this is a well-intentioned book, aiming to instruct as it amuses. Aye! Let me give you the key to mundane happiness, a gift from the Great Doctor and me: "Wish for your own hatchet."

POPE PIUS II ("Aeneas Silvius" Piccolomini): *History of the Amours of Eurialus and Lucretia*. I could tell you a good deal about Aeneas Silvius, because he was Pope in the lifetime of Mona Lisa's father, and I have been to some pains through the past six years to find out all I could about the public figures of that period. Many Protestants and Atheists call Pius II the "best" of all Popes, meaning, I think, that his official acts were not so bigoted as most. He himself condemned nobody to be burned alive for heresy. The Holy Office (of the Inquisition) was quiescent, almost inactive through his reign. A thoughtful, non-Catholic student of this man's life, public and private, can hardly escape the conclusion that he put on his "faith" with his vestments, and "wore" it for the same reason.

I am unable to share the respect of these commentators for Piccolomini, because of a prejudiced obsession of mine against all politicians. The better they are at duping the public—which is the essence of their business—the less use I have for them as men: and Aeneas Silvius, Pius II, was almost as good at it as the late F. D. R. The word for him was "terrific", and some of the *deals* he made before and after he became Pope reveal him as a conscienceless

trader. This "novel" of his is part of the picture of a glad-hander, hail-fellow, lacking only cigars.

As you will read in the short preamble to the tale, it was written in Latin; and this translation is curious in that it tells you what the man wrote instead of giving you an English rendering of his words. It is included here for the novelty of it, and because it is so difficult to find. I venture that it has not been published in English since printers stopped using "f" for s". My copy, from which this text is taken, is in the Supplement of Hogg's *New Novelist's Magazine*, "containing elegant translations of a variety of French, Spanish and other foreign romances, novels, fables, allegories, memoirs, adventures, histories, anecdotes, etc. Written by eminent authors, and translated by Lewis Porney, Esq. London, n. d. (1786?)."

ANONYMOUS: *The Grave Robbers*. This story is obviously propaganda against a minority, the ghouls. It is calculated to inflame the public mind against medical students. The author did well to conceal his name—for more reasons than one. The text is taken from "The GARLAND; or, Token of Friendship. A Christmas and New Year's Gift for 1852. Edited by Emily Percival. Boston."

W. C. MORROW: *Faithful Amulet*. From *The Ape, The Idiot and Other People*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1897. The book contains fourteen stories which will bear your best attention. It was recommended to me about 1925, by L. C. Botsford, of Cleveland, a collector of "imaginary voyages" and of George Borrow.

FELIX RIESENBERG: *Endless River* (Selections). Felix and I took a shine to each other the moment we met, in 1930, but it was the sea, and not writing which brought us together. He was a Commander in the United States Navy, and I had just bought a speed boat! He put me up for membership in the Larchmont Yacht Club, and things were so bad just then (you may remember) that they actually let me in: but even before I was admitted to membership I moved to Hollywood—and stayed there five years. Felix came out there too, as technical adviser on a sea-going picture, and then it was that I read *Endless River*. It is sweepings, frankly: but sweepings from a place where the floor is

littered with gold leaf and diamond dust, and chips tooled off a running blob of quicksilver.

It is a writers' book, a writers' catch all, made up principally of stories started. Hardly any are finished, although Felix told me that one piece included here had been rejected by at least twenty magazines. That is the story of the librarian who learned to live so cheaply.

The fragments I have chosen are the most memorable to me. I read them still with a great deal of pleasure, and with even greater respect and admiration for the man who set them down.

E. T. W. HOFFMANN: *The Sandman*. You were probably educated frontwards. I was not. . . . One day, at 13, reading, belly on the floor, I got that electric shock of discovery which shakes the frame and leaves one sweating (it was not the first time, nor the last, please, Mercur!). The book was Victor Hugo's *le Roi s'amuse*, and as the plot unfolded I recognized it and cried aloud to my mother: "Why!—this is *Rigoletto*!"

That's what I mean about not being educated frontwards. I sang in the chorus of the *Tales of Hoffmann* ten years before I ever read this story. Then, when I did come to read it (upon the recommendation of old Bill Douglas, a Chicago bookman of happy memory), I got that well known, well-loved shock. "By God! This is the first act of *Hoffmann*!"

So it is.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT: *Regret*. You can find men under every bush to root for *The Diamond Necklace*, *The Horla*, *Ball of Suet*, and *A Piece of String*. I like this story best of all the 204 he wrote, because—I'm pretty much of a mind with the poet who sang—

"For of all sad words of tongue or pen,

The saddest are these: 'It might have been.'"

Who was it—Burns?

O. HENRY: *Robe of Peace*. This is a dry Martini too: alum under the lip. *Gift of the Magi* is too arty by half—the 1890 scenario about a woman who bobbed her hair. That isn't for me. This is.



MARK TWAIN: *A Mediaeval Romance* My paternal grandmother was the only completely insufferable human being I have ever met, although I could name some runners-up of mighty attainments in that field. One of her Methodist, female, spiteful meanesses was to lean so heavily upon my father that he had not the heart to leave her in Freeport, Illinois, and develop his truly first-rate talents as a comedian in show business. Every time he came off the road she kept him at home as long as possible, and in those periods he invariably went to work at the Henney Buggy Company as a carriage painter. Evenings he read aloud to the entire family assembled, and Mark Twain was a great favorite with us all. I fancy I was about six when he read this story to us, and there it has stuck in my memory ever since. It isn't art. It isn't Kosher. It isn't legitimate. Nevertheless, it pays off and the world would be poorer without it.

H. M. TOMLINSON: *The Derelict*. One observes that compiling a book like this, if it be done honestly, is some nine times as self-revealing as telling a psychiatrist one's dreams. In fact, looking backward over the yarns already mentioned, and checking off the characteristics indicated by such preferences—terrifies even me. You will be well advised to hold no traffic whatever with such a man. I mean to give him up myself, come a day. Meanwhile, one finds chapters like *The Derelict* to read, and chapters like this same Tomlinson's cogitations as he sprawls on the hatch crossing the Atlantic in *The Sea and the Jungle*. DON'T miss that.

Somehow, I think H. M. Tomlinson suffered more through World Fraud II than any other English prophet. Shaw, Douglas and Wells—the only others of similar stature—all had their inner armor (of a brazen metal alloy) to withstand the acid bath of crass, officially prescribed ignorance, stupidity and deception: but Tomlinson has no such armor. His sensibilities and sensitivities are all open and defenseless as a daisy's face—turned flatly up toward heaven in vain hope of an ultimate, providential dew.

Men should not have Tomlinson's capacity for suffering. It is too cruel. But—there's the problem: H. M. Tomlinson *must* have had this capacity to suffer, or we should never have had *The Derelict* to read. Would you, to spare him pain, give back the incident—unread, unrecorded? I don't know.

HARRY LEON WILSON: *Little Old New York*. Earlier in these notes, I confessed to collecting books on suicide. I also collect on the philosophy of laughter—and first editions of Harry Leon Wilson. My copy of *Somewhere in Red Gap* (which contains this short story) is inscribed on the bastard-title: “To Tiffany Thayer—This burly old Jade does talk a lot—Harry Leon Wilson.”

The “burly old Jade” is, of course, Ma Pettengill, a major American creation. If the generation after mine is missing her, it is missing a good deal, and steps should be taken to rectify the oversight. All that most people remember about the motion picture version of *Ruggles of Red Gap* is that Charles Laughton recited the Gettysburg Address. That is too bad. If they will trouble to read the book they will find more memorable matter. They will find some of the funniest scenes ever written, and they will meet “the Mixer” Mrs. Lysander John Pettengill, Ma, “an elderly person of immense bulk in gray walking-skirt, heavy boots, and a flowered blouse that was overwhelming. Her face, under her grayish thatch of hair, was broad and smiling, the eyes keen, the mouth wide, and the nose rather a bit blobby.” This is the widowed proprietor of the Arrowhead Ranch, whose favorite reading is the *Breeder's Gazette*, whose favorite tippie is “tea so corrosive that the Scotch whiskey she adds to it is but a merciful dilution”, who rolls her own cigarettes, and who tells the story of *Little Old New York*.

LAFCADIO HEARN *Little Red Kitten*. My sophisticated friends will be nonplussed to find this kitten here. My radical friends will sputter that the space could better have accommodated something of social significance. Doubtless, too, there are better cat stories—but if there is a psychiatrist in the house he will understand. I like this one.

Hearn is himself a strange sort for me to cotton to: pretty mild: a bit precious. . . . One falls in love first with his name, I think, *Lafcadio Hearn*. Why!—it should always be set in italics. . . . Then, there's the charm of being uncrowded when one is at these devotions. He is not only exotic, but esoteric. Indeed, reading Hearn is a little like drinking straight lemon juice: not everybody can do it.

*Black Cupid*. Both these pieces appeared first in the *New Orleans Item*, making Hearn one with Lardner, Hecht, Bierce, Ade and

Saki, as a part-time, at least quasi-journalist. After that is said, Hearn parts company with Lardner and Ade completely. One looks in vain for outright laughter anywhere in his work. He walks with Hecht a little longer, for both knew the pathos in the day's news, and how to exploit it with effect. The fantastic holds him somewhat longer beside Saki—but then the Scot takes the wings of wit and leaves Lafcadio without a rejoinder.

With Bierce, Hearn has much more in common, and with such gentry as Edgar Saltus, Lord Dunsany, Charles Godfrey Leland, Arthur Machen, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, and—more recently—Gustav Eckstein, in that each of these has his little band of faithful in whose eyes their man can write no wrong. I have not this fanaticism for any of the group, but look upon them as the condiments and conserves of a literary meal. Leland is pickles, perhaps, and Saltus, the mustard: Bierce—the olives, and Hearn—caviar.

J. S. FLETCHER: *Beatific Vision*. This is the same man who became the toast of the nation's amateur sleuths just before S. S. Van Dyne and Dashiel Hammett slithered into headquarters. The story is some of his earliest work, taken from a group of similarly despairing pieces called *God's Failures*. So many of my selected sardonicisms are early work of their respective authors, and so many are utterly different from the writing which later made each famous, that one is impelled to search the coincidence for significance. The commonplace observation is that young writers all are bitter. That each has to get this "sophomoric" venom out of his system before he can settle down to the real business of writing. If I shared this view of the matter I should be compelled, in all logic, to admit that my preference for these themes is evidence of arrested development in myself. I should stand convicted of being a perennial sophomore. Well, is that bad? . . . However that may be, my interpretation is not so orthodox, and I do not agree with that scholastic, "Right People" explanation of the sharp corner turned by so many careers. It is not that "maturity" teaches the bitter that things are less bad than they seem. It is, rather, the reluctance of a mercantile civilization to permit the truth to pay. Age doesn't change the writer's view so much, but experience teaches him what he can sell. And what he can sell is not bitter but sweet. Aye, what is so sweet as a sale!

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: *Rappaccini's Daughter*. The beads of this pagan rosary are very nearly told, and one realizes that two-thirds of the authors are now in that department of heaven where they read aloud—not the reviews of their books, as Ben Hecht might have it, but—the publicity sent out by their publishers, their jacket blurbs. Does this heavy-leaning on the dead indicate that our younger men are not producing tinted poisons?—or merely that I am not reading them? Well, here are complete files of *Dyn* (Mexico City), *View*, *Minotaur*, *Signature* and *Transition*; and a dozen numbers of *International Literature* (Moscow), not to mention a pile of *Story*: but I find nothing in any of them to take the place of this piece from an old school-book, *Mosses from an Old Manse*. So that, in addition to all the other weaknesses of my character now exposed, we must add intellectual reactionarianism. Thayer is an old fogey.

There is nothing impossible to that, surely. I like this story of what a man saw from his window, and I recall that the same vantage point is employed by Hans Heinz Ewers in *The Spider*. Years ago, Hans Hanke and I used to translate Ewers and Gustave Meyrink for our own amusement. That is, Hans would read aloud in English from the German text, while the matter was taken down in shorthand, which I would then rewrite, pellucidly Americano. None of these stories was ever published, and the only MSS remaining is that of *The Hot Soldier*, which is not good enough for this book.

H. G. WELLS: *Pearl of Love*. This is the legend of the Taj Mahal. It is an adequate reply on behalf of womankind for the ancient libel recorded in the *Matron of Ephesus*.

VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM: *Vox Populi*. Adam, they say, used to sit at a cafe table on Montmartre, with such friends as Baudelaire, Coppee, Proudhomme, Daudet, Catulle Mendes. . . . "In the early days of his Paris life, he had given rein, in all companies, to that enjoyment of the fact of living which expressed itself in his case by an overflow of wit and humor," writes his biographer, Vicomte Robert du Pontavice de Heussey. "But he soon perceived, alas! that the raptures of his audience were not disinterested. . . . the poor poet, opening a newspaper or magazine at random, would find his own ideas and creations shamefully travestied and muti-

lated, and impudently signed with names which bore no resemblance to his own."

Still he preserved a sufficient stock of his own ideas to become the literary titan of his day (albeit, one hungry titan), so that Anatole France, as a cub reporter, was sent to interview him, and Joris Karl Huysmans, just beginning to shave, took him for his idol. In the toils of the then current censors were Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and the poems of Baudelaire. Verily! "Have pity on the blind—if you please."

HOLWORTHY HALL and ROBERT MIDDLEMASS: *The Valiant*. I read this play in McClure's Magazine the day it came on the stands in 1921. I was an actor, "between engagements", living in Maywood, with my mother, an actress. I called her, and started to read the play to her—getting along fine until I came to—

"Sleep dwell upon thine eyes—"

and, for the first time in my life, I broke up. I couldn't go on. Professional, son of professionals, it is still too much for me. I weep every damned time I read it, even to myself. On the street, if I think of it, and shape the words—"Sleep dwell upon thine eyes—" I get a cinder in my eye at once.

A great many men have called *The Valiant* "one of the best" short plays ever written. I am not a fellow for such half measures. This is THE best, and more than that, it is the most nearly flawless work of art which I know in the English language.

I tore out the pages from McClure's and mailed them to my good friend Becky, Miss Lulu B. Beckington, who had taught me what commas were for in school. She was in Belvedere, Illinois, then, and scheduled to "read" for some gathering—Parent-Teachers, likely. She cut *The Valiant* and read it—to an ovation. Let sue who will, I wonder if that was not the first public "performance" of the piece.

Becky has never told me whether she broke up or not.

TIFFANY THAYER

December 25, 15 FS

December 26, 1945 old style

# THE LAST OF THE STORIES

RUDYARD KIPLING

BORN: Bombay, December 30, 1865. DIED: London, January 18, 1936.

*Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion.—ECC. iii, 22.*

“**K**ENCH WITH A long hand, lazy one,” I said to the punkah coolie. “But I am tired,” said the coolie. “Then go to Jehannum and get another man to pull,” I replied, which was rude and, when you come to think of it, unnecessary.

“Happy thought—go to Jehannum!” said a voice at my elbow. I turned and saw, seated on the edge of my bed, a large and luminous Devil. “I’m not afraid,” I said. “You’re an illusion bred by too much tobacco and not enough sleep. If I look at you steadily for a minute you will disappear. You are an *ignis fatuus*.”

“Fatuus yourself!” answered the Devil blandly. “Do you mean to say you don’t know me?” He shrivelled up to the size of a blob of sediment on the end of a pen, and I recognised my old friend the Devil of Discontent, who lived in the bottom of the inkpot, but emerges half a day after each story has been printed with a host of useless suggestions for its betterment.

“Oh, it’s you, is it?” I said. “You’re not due till next week. Get back to your inkpot.”

“Too late, as usual. I know your ways.”

“No. It’s a perfectly practicable one. Your swearing at the coolie

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Written for periodical publication about 1890, reprinted by B. W. Dodge & Co., and by Doubleday, Page & Co., 1909 in the volume—*Abaft the Funnel*.

suggested it. Did you ever hear of a man called Dante—charmin' fellow, friend o' mine?"

" 'Dante once prepared to paint a picture,' " I quoted.

"Yes. I inspired that notion—but never mind. Are you willing to play Dante to my Virgil? I can't guarantee a nine-circle Inferno, any more than you can turn out a cantoed epic, but there's absolutely no risk and—it will run to three columns at least."

"But what sort of Hell do you own?" I said. "I fancied *your* operations were mostly above ground. You have no jurisdiction over the dead."

"Sainted Leopardi!" rapped the Devil, resuming natural size. "Is that all you know? I'm proprietor of one of the largest Hells in existence—the Limbo of Lost Endeavor, where the souls of all the Characters go."

"Characters? What Characters?"

"All the characters that are drawn in books, painted in novels, sketched in magazine articles, thumb-nailed in feuilletons or in any way created by anybody and everybody who has had the fortune or misfortune to put his or her writings into print."

"That sounds like a quotation from a prospectus. What do you herd Characters for? Aren't there enough souls in the Universe?"

"Who possess souls and who do not? For aught you can prove, man may be soulless and the creatures he writes about immortal. Anyhow, about a hundred years after printing became an established nuisance, the loose Characters used to blow about interplanetary space in legions which interfered with traffic. So they were collected, and their charge became mine by right. Would you care to see them? Your own are there."

"That decides me. But is it hotter than Northern India?"

"On my Devildom, no. Put your arms round my neck and sit tight. I'm going to dive!"

He plunged from the bed headfirst into the floor. There was a smell of jail-durrie and damp earth; and then fell the black darkness of night.

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We stood before a door in a topless wall, from the further side of which came faintly the roar of infernal fires.

"But you said there was no danger!" I cried in an extremity of terror.

"No more there is," said the Devil. "That's only the Furnace of First Edition. Will you go on? No other human being has set foot here in the flesh. Let me bring the door to your notice. Pretty design, isn't it? A joke of the Master's."

I shuddered, for the door was nothing more than a coffin, the backboard knocked out, set on end in the thickness of the wall. As I hesitated, the silence of space was cut by a sharp, shrill whistle, like that of a live shell, which rapidly grew louder and louder. "Get away from the door," said the Devil of Discontent quickly. "Here's a soul coming to its place." I took refuge under the broad vans of the Devil's wings. The whistle rose to an ear-splitting shriek and a naked soul flashed past me.

"Always the same," said the Devil quietly. "These little writers are so anxious to reach their reward. H'm, I don't think he likes his'n, though." A yell of despair reached my ears and I shuddered afresh. "Who was he?" I asked. "Hack-writer for a pornographic firm in Belgium, exporting to London, you'll understand presently—and now we'll go in," said the Devil. "I must apologise for that creature's rudeness. He should have stopped at the distance-signal for line-clear. You can hear the souls whistling there now."

"Are they the souls of men?" I whispered.

"Yes—writer-men. That's why they are so shrill and querulous. Welcome to the Limbo of Lost Endeavour!"

They passed into a domed hall, more vast than visions could embrace, crowded to its limit by men, women and children. Round the eye of the dome ran, a flickering fire, that terrible quotation from Job: "Oh, that mine enemy had written a book!"

"Neat, isn't it?" said the Devil, following my glance. "Another joke of the Master's. Man of *Us*, y'know. In the old days we used to put the Characters in a disused circle of Dante's Inferno, but they grew overcrowded. So Balzac and Theophile Gautier were commissioned to write up this building. It took them three years to complete, and is one of the finest under earth. Don't attempt to describe it unless you are quite sure you are equal to Balzac and Gautier in collaboration. Look at the crowds and tell me what you think of them."



I looked long and earnestly, and saw that many of the multitude were cripples. They walked on their heels or their toes, or with a list to the right or left. A few of them possessed odd eyes and parti-coloured hair; more threw themselves into absurd and impossible attitudes; and every fourth woman seemed to be weeping.

"Who are these?" I said.

"Mainly the population of three-volume novels that never reach the six-shilling stage. See that beautiful girl with one grey eye and one brown, and the black and yellow hair? Let her be an awful warning to you how you correct your proofs. She was created by a careless writer a month ago, and he changed all colours in the second volume. So she came here as you see her. There will be trouble when she meets her author. He can't alter her now, and she says she'll accept no apology."

"But when will she meet her author?"

"Not in my department. Do you notice a general air of expectancy among all the Characters? They are waiting for their authors. Look! That explains the system better than I can."

A lovely maiden, at whose feet I would willingly have fallen and worshipped, detached herself from the crowd and hastened to the door through which I had just come. There was a prolonged whistle without, a soul dashed through the coffin and fell upon her neck. The girl with the parti-coloured hair eyed the couple enviously as they departed arm in arm to the other side of the hall.

"That man," said the Devil, "wrote one magazine story, of twenty-four pages, ten years ago when he was desperately in love with a flesh and blood woman. He put all his heart into the work, and created the girl you have just seen. The flesh and blood woman married some one else and died—it's a way they have—but the man has this girl for his very own, and she will everlastingly glow sweeter."

"Then the Characters are independent?"

"Slightly! Have you never known one of your Characters—even yours—get beyond control as soon as they are made?"

"That's true. Where are those two happy creatures going?"

"To the Levels. You've heard of authors finding their levels? We keep all the Levels here. As each writer enters, he picks up his

Characters, or they pick him up, as the case may be, and to the Levels he goes."

"I should like to see—"

"So you shall, when you come through that door a second time—whistling. I can't take you there now."

"Do you keep only the Characters of living scribblers in this hall?"

"We should be crowded out if we didn't draft them off somehow. Step this way and I'll take you to the Master. One moment, though. There's John Ridd with Lorna Doone, and there are Mr. Maliphant and the Bormalacks—clannish folk, those Besant Characters—don't let the twins talk to you about Literature and Art. Come along. What's here?"

The white face of Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, broke through the press. "I wish to explain," said he in a level voice, "that had I been consulted I should never have blown out my brains with the Duchess and all that Poker Flat lot. I wish to add that the only woman I ever loved was the wife of Brown of Calaveras." He pressed his hand behind him suggestively. "All right, Mr. Oakhurst," I said hastily; "I believe you." "Kin you set it right?" he asked, dropping into the Doric of the Gulches. I caught a trigger's cloth-muffled click. "Just heavens!" I groaned. "Must I be shot for the sake of another man's Characters?" Oakhurst levelled his revolver at my head, but the weapon was struck up by the hand of Yuba Bill. "You durned fool!" said the stage-driver. "Hevn't I told you no one but a blamed idiot shoots at sight now? Let the galoot go. You kin see by his eyes he's no party to your matrimonial arrangements." Oakhurst retired with an irreproachable bow, but in my haste to escape I fell over Caliban, his head in a melon and his tame orc under his arm. He spat like a wildcat.

"Manners none, customs beastly," said the Devil. "We'll take the Bishop with us. They all respect the Bishop." And the great Bishop Blougram joined us, calm and smiling, with the news, for my private ear, that Mr. Gigadibs despised him no longer.

We were arrested by a knot of semi-nude Bacchantes kissing a clergyman. The Bishop's eyes twinkled, and I turned to the Devil for explanation.

"That's Robert Elsmere—what's left of him," said the Devil.

"Those are French *feuilleton* women and scourings of the Opera Comique. He has been lecturing 'em, and they don't like it." "He lectured me!" said the Bishop with a bland smile. "He has been a nuisance ever since he came here. By the Holy Law of Proportion, he had the audacity to talk to the Master! Called him a 'pot-bellied barbarian'! That is why he is walking so stiffly now," said the Devil. "Listen! Marie Piggeonnier is swearing deathless love to him. On my word, we ought to segregate the French characters entirely. By the way, your regiment came in very handy for Zola's importations."

"My regiment?" I said. "How do you mean?"

"You wrote something about the Tyneside Tail-Twisters, just enough to give the outline of the regiment, and of course it came down here—one thousand and eighty strong. I told it off in hollow squares to pen up the Rougon-Macquart series. There they are." I looked and saw the Tyneside Tail-Twisters ringing an inferno of struggling, shouting, blaspheming men and women in the costumes of the Second Empire. Now and again the shadowy ranks brought down their butts on the toes of the crowd inside the square, and shrieks of pain followed. "You should have indicated your men more clearly; they are hardly up to their work," said the Devil. "If the Zola tribe increases, I'm afraid I shall have to use up your two companies of the Black Tryone and two of the Old Regiment."

"I am proud—" I began.

"Go slow," said the Devil. "You won't be half so proud in a little while, and I don't think much of your regiments, anyway. But they are good enough to fight the French. Can you hear Coupeau raving in the left angle of the square? He used to run about the hall seeing pink snakes, till the children's story-book Characters protested. Come along!"

Never since Caxton pulled his first proof and made for the world a new and most terrible God of Labour had mortal man such an experience as mine when I followed the Devil of Discontent through the shifting crowds below the motto of the Dome. A few—a very few—of the faces were of old friends, but there were thousands whom I did not recognise. Men in every conceivable attire and of every possible nationality, deformed by intention, or

the impotence of creation that could not create—blind, unclean, heroic, mad, sinking under the weight of remorse or with eyes made splendid by the light of love and fixed endeavour; women fashioned in ignorance and mourning the errors of their creator, life and thought at variance with body and soul; perfect women such as walk rarely upon this earth, and horrors that were women only because they had not sufficient self-control to be fiends; little children fair as the morning, who put their hands into mine and made most innocent confidences; loathsome, lank-haired infant-saints, curious as to the welfare of my soul, and delightfully mischievous boys, generalled by the irrepressible Tom Sawyer, who played among murderers, harlots, professional beauties, nuns, Italian bandits and politicians of state.

The ordered peace of Arthur's Court was broken up by the incursions of Mr. John Wellington Wells, and Dragonet, the jester, found that his antics drew no attention so long as the "dealer in magic and spells," taking Tristram's harp, sang patter-songs to the Round Table; while a Zulu Impi, headed by Allan Quatermain, wheeled and shouted in sham fight for the pleasure of Little Lord Fauntleroy. Every century and every type was jumbled in the confusion of one colossal fancy-ball where all the characters were living their parts.

"Aye, look long," said the Devil. "You will never be able to describe it, and the next time you come you won't have the chance. Look long, and look at"—Good's passing with a maiden of the Zu-Vendi must have suggested the idea—"look at their legs." I looked, and for the second time noticed the lameness that seemed to be almost universal in the Limbo of Lost Endeavour. Brave men and stalwart to all appearance had one leg shorter than the other; some paced a few inches above the floor, never touching it, and others found the greatest difficulty in preserving their feet at all. The stiffness and laboured gait of these thousands were pitiful to witness. I was sorry for them. I told the Devil as much.

"H'm," said he reflectively, "that's the world's work. Rather cockeye, ain't it? They do everything but stand on their feet. You could improve them, I suppose?" There was an unpleasant sneer in his tone, and I hastened to change the subject.

"I'm tired of walking," I said. "I want to see some of my own

characters, and go on to the Master, whoever he may be, afterwards."

"Reflect," said the Devil. "Are you certain—do you know how many they be?"

"No—but I want to see them. That's what I came for."

"Very well. Don't abuse me if you don't like the view. There are one-and-fifty of your make up to date, and—it's rather an appalling thing to be confronted with fifty-one children. However, here's a special favourite of yours. Go and shake hands with her!"

A limp-jointed, staring-eyed doll was hirpling towards me with a strained smile of recognition. I felt that I knew her only too well—if indeed she were she. "Keep her off, Devil!" I cried, stepping back. "I never made *that*!" "She began to weep and she began to cry, Lord ha' mercy on me, this is none of *It*! You're very rude to—Mrs. Hauksbee, and she wants to speak to you," said the Devil. My face must have betrayed my dismay, for the Devil went on soothingly: "That's as she is, remember. I *knew* you wouldn't like it. Now what will you give if I make her as she ought to be? No, I don't want your soul, thanks. I have it already, and many others of better quality. Will you, when you write your story, own that I am the best and greatest of all the Devils?" The doll was creeping nearer. "Yes," I said hurriedly. "Anything you like. Only I can't stand her in that state."

"You'll have to when you come next again. Look! No connection with Jekyll and Hyde!" The Devil pointed a lean and inky finger towards the doll, and lo! radiant, bewitching, with a smile of dainty malice, her high heels clicking on the floor like castanets, advanced Mrs. Hauksbee as I had imagined her in the beginning.

"Ah!" she said, "You are here so soon? Not dead yet? That will come. Meantime, a thousand congratulations. And now, what do you think of me?" She put her hands on her hips, revealed a glimpse of the smallest foot in Simla and hummed: "'Just look at that . . . just look at this! And then you'll see I'm not amiss.'"

"She'll use exactly the same words when you meet her next time," said the Devil warningly. "You dowered her with any amount of vanity, if you left out— Excuse me a minute! I'll fetch up the rest of your menagerie." But I was looking at Mrs. Hauksbee.

"Well," she said. "Am I what you expected?" I forgot the Devil and all his works, forgot that this was not the woman I had made, and could only murmur rapturously: "By Jove! You are a beauty." Then, incautiously: "And you stand on your feet." "Good heavens!" said Mrs. Hauksbee. "Would you, at my time of life, have me stand on my head?" She folded her arms and looked me up and down. I was grinning imbecilely—the woman was so alive. "Talk," I said absently; "I want to hear you talk." "I am not used to being spoken to like a coolie," she replied. "Never mind," I said, "that may be for outsiders, but I made you and I've a right—"

"You have a right? You made me? My dear sir, if I didn't know that we should bore each other so inextinguishably hereafter I should read you an hour's lecture this instant. You made me! I suppose you will have the audacity to pretend that you understand me—that you ever understood me. Oh, man, man—foolish man! If you only knew!"

"Is that the person who thinks he understands us, Loo?" drawled a voice at her elbow. The Devil had returned with a cloud of witnesses, and it was Mrs. Mallowe who was speaking.

"I've touched 'em all up," said the Devil in an aside. "You couldn't stand 'em raw. But don't run away with the notion that they are your work. I show you what they ought to be. You must find out for yourself how to make 'em so."

"Am I allowed to remodel the batch—up above?" I asked anxiously.

"*Litera scripta manet*. That's in the Delectus and Eternity." He turned round to the semi-circle of Characters: "Ladies and gentlemen, who are all a great deal better than you should be by virtue of my power, let me introduce you to your maker. If you have anything to say to him, you can say it."

"What insolence!" said Mrs. Hauksbee between her teeth. "This isn't a Peterhoff drawing-room. I haven't the slightest intention of being leaved by this person. Polly, come here and we'll watch the animals go by." She and Mrs. Mallowe stood at my side. I turned crimson with shame, for it is an awful thing to see one's Characters in the solid.

"Wal," said Gilead P. Beck as he passed, "I would not be you at this pre-cise moment of time, not for all the ile in the univarsal

airth. No, sirr! I thought my dinner-party was soul-shatterin', but it's mush—mush and milk—to your circus. Let the good work go on!"

I turned to the company and saw that they were men and women, standing upon their feet as folks should stand. Again I forgot the Devil, who stood apart and sneered. From the distant door of entry I could hear the whistle of arriving souls, from the semi-darkness at the end of the hall came the thunderous roar of the Furnace of First Edition, and everywhere the restless crowds of Characters muttered and rustled like windblown autumn leaves. But I looked upon my own people and was perfectly content as man could be.

"I have seen you study a new dress with just such an expression of idiotic beatitude," whispered Mrs. Mallowe to Mrs. Hauksbee. "Hush!" said the latter. "He thinks he understands." Then to me: "Please trot them out. Eternity is long enough in all conscience, but that is no reason for wasting it. *Pro-ceed*, or shall I call them up? Mrs. Vansuythen, Mr. Boulton, Mrs. Boulton, Captain Kurrel and the Major!" The European population in Kashima in the Dosehri hills, the actors in the Wayside Comedy, moved towards me; and I saw with delight that they were human. "So you wrote about us?" said Mrs. Boulton. "About my confession to my husband and my hatred of that Vansuythen woman? Did you think that you understood? Are *all* men such fools?" "That woman is bad form," said Mrs. Hauksbee, "but she speaks the truth. I wonder what these soldiers have to say." Gunner Barnabas and Private Shacklock stopped, saluted, and hoped I would take no offence if they gave it as their opinion that I had not "got them down quite right." I gasped.

A spurred Hussar succeeded, his wife on his arm. It was Captain Gadsby and Minnie, and close behind them swaggered Jack Maffin, the Brigadier-General in his arms. "Had the cheek to try to describe our life, had you?" said Gadsby carelessly. "Ha-hmm! S'pose he understood, Minnie?" Mrs. Gadsby raised her face to her husband and murmured: "I'm sure he didn't, Pip," while Poor Dear Mamma, still in her riding-habit hissed: "I'm sure he didn't understand me." And these also went their way.

One after another they filed by—Trewinnard, the pet of his

Department; Otis Yeere, lean and lanthorn-jawed; Crook O'Neil and Bobby Wick arm in arm; Janki Meah, the blind miner in the Jimahari coal fields; Afzul Khan, the policeman; the murderous Pathan horse-dealer, Durga Dass; the bunnia, Boh Da Thone; the dacoit, Dana Da, weaver of false magic; the Leander of the Warhwiford; Peg Barney drunk as a coot; Mrs. Delville, the dowd; Dinah Shadd, large, red-cheeked and resolute; Simmons, Slane and Losson; Georgie Pogie and his Burmese helpmate; a shadow in a high collar, who was all that I had ever indicated of the Hawley Boy—the nameless men and women who had trod the Hill of Illusion and lived in the Tents of Kedar, and last, His Majesty the King.

Each one in passing told me the same tale, and the burden thereof was: "You did not understand." My heart turned sick within me. "Where's Wee Willie Winkie?" I shouted. "Little children don't lie."

A clatter of pony's feet followed, and the child appeared, habited as on the day he rode into Afghan territory to warn Coppy's love against the "bad men." "I've been playing," he sobbed, "playing on ve Levels wiv Jackanapes and Lollo, an' he says I'm only just borrowed. I'm *isn't* borrowed. I'm Willie Wi-inkie! Vere's Coppy?"

"'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,'" whispered the Devil, who had drawn nearer. "You know the rest of the proverb. Don't look as if you were going to be shot in the morning! Here are the last of your gang."

I turned despairingly to the Three Musketeers, dearest of all my childred to me—to Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris and Learoyd. Surely the Three would not turn against me as the others had done! I shook hands with Mulvaney. "Terence, how goes? Are you going to make fun of me, too?" "'Tis not for me to make fun av you, sorr," said the Irishman, "knowin' as I du know, fwat good friends we've been for the matter av three years."

"Fower," said Ortheris, "'twas in the Helanthami barracks, H block, we was become acquaint, an' 'ere's thankin' you kindly for all the beer we've drunk twix' that and now."

"Four ut is, then," said Mulvaney. "He an' Dinah Shadd are your friends, but—" He stood uneasily.

"But what?" I said.



"Savin' your presence, sorr, an' it's more than onwillin' I am to be hurtin' you; you did not ondersthand. On my soul an' honour, sorr, you did not ondersthand. Come along, you two."

But Ortheris stayed for a moment to whisper: "It's Gawd's own trewth, but there's this 'ere to think. 'Tain't the bloomin' belt that's wrong, as Peg Barney sez, when he's up for bein' dirty on p'rade. 'Tain't the bloomin' belt, sir; it's the bloomin' pipeclay." Ere I could seek an explanation he had joined his companions.

"For a private soldier, a singularly shrewd man," said Mrs. Hauksbee, and she repeated Ortheris's words. The last drop filled my cup, and I am ashamed to say that I bade her be quiet in a wholly unjustifiable tone. I was rewarded by what would have been a notable lecture on propriety, had I not said to the Devil: "Change that woman to a d—d doll again! Change 'em all back as they were—as they are. I'm sick of them."

"Poor wretch!" said the Devil of Discontent very quietly. "They are changed."

The reproof died on Mrs. Hauksbee's lips, and she moved away marionette-fashion, Mrs. Mallowe trailing after her. I hastened after the remainder of the Characters, and they were changed indeed—even as the Devil had said, who kept at my side.

They limped and stuttered and staggered and mouthed and staggered round me, till I could endure no more.

"So I am the master of this idiotic puppet-show, am I?" I said bitterly, watching Mulvaney trying to come to attention by spasms.

"*In saecula saeculorum*," said the Devil, bowing his head; "and you needn't kick, my dear fellow, because they will concern no one but yourself by the time you whistle up to the door. Stop reviling me and uncover. Here's the Master!"

Uncover! I would have dropped on my knees, had not the Devil prevented me, at the sight of the portly form of Maitre François Rabelais, some time Cure of Meudon. He wore a smoke-stained apron of the colours of Gargantua. I made a sign which was duly returned. "An Entered Apprentice in difficulties with his rough ashlar, Worshipful Sir," explained the Devil. I was too angry to speak.

Said the Master, rubbing his chin: "Are those things yours?" "Even so, Worshipful Sir," I muttered, praying inwardly that the

Characters would at least keep quiet while the Master was near. He touched one or two thoughtfully, put his hand upon my shoulder and started: "By the Great Bells of Notre Dame, you are in the flesh—the warm flesh!—the flesh I quitted so long—ah, so long! And you fret and behave unseemly because of these shadows! Listen now! I, even I, would give my Three, Panurge, Gargantua and Pantagruel, for one little hour of the life that is in you. And I am the Master!"

But the words gave me no comfort. I could hear Mrs. Mallowe's joints cracking—or it might have been merely her stays.

"Worshipful Sir, he will not believe that," said the Devil. "Who live by shadows lust for shadows. Tell him something more to his need."

The Master grunted contemptuously: "And he is flesh and blood! Know this, then, The First Law is to make them stand upon their feet, and the Second is to make them stand upon their feet, and the Third is to make them stand upon their feet. But, for all that, Trajan is a fisher of frogs." He passed on, and I could hear him say to himself: "One hour—one minute—of life in the flesh, and I would sell the Great Perhaps thrice over!"

"Well," said the Devil, "you've made the Master angry, seen about all there is to be seen, except the Furnace of First Edition, and, as the Master is in charge of that, I should avoid it. Now you'd better go. You know what you ought to do?"

"I don't need all Hell—"

"Pardon me. Better men that you have called this Paradise."

"All Hell, I said, and the Master to tell me what I knew before. What I want to know is how?" "Go and find out," said the Devil. We turned to the door, and I was aware that my Characters had grouped themselves at the exit. "They are going to give you an ovation. Think o'that, now!" said the Devil. I shuddered and dropped my eyes, while one-and-fifty voices broke into a wailing song, whereof the words, so far as I recollect, ran:

But we brought forth and reared in hours  
Of change, alarm, surprise.  
What shelter to grow ripe is ours—  
What leisure to grow wise?

I ran the gauntlet, narrowly missed collision with an impetuous soul (I hoped he liked his Characters when he met them), and flung free into the night, where I should have knocked my head against the stars. But the Devil caught me.

\* \* \* \* \*

The brain-fever bird was fluting across the grey, dewy lawn, and the punkah had stopped again. "Go to Jehannum and get another man to pull," I said drowsily. "Exactly," said a voice from the inkpot.

Now the proof that this story is absolutely true lies in the fact that there will be no other to follow it.

# THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

(ROME)

EDGAR ALLAN POE

BORN: Boston, January 19, 1809. DIED: Baltimore, October 7, 1849.

THE THOUSAND INJURIES of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity—to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack—but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially:

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First published in *Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book*, Philadelphia, November, 1846.

I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him, "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi—"

"I have no engagement;—come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are incrustured with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontil-

lado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaus, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresois.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ngh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi—"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of his Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field of azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said, "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my roquelaire.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaus rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about forty feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He's an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his



progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key, I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitie. Indeed it is very damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeau over the mason work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the

solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yell of him who clamored. I reëchoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. I was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

“Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” I said.

“He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo,—the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.”

“Yes,” I said, “let us be gone.”

“For the love of God, Montresor!”

“Yes,” I said, “for the love of God!”

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

“Fortunato!”

No answer. I called again—

“Fortunato!”

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I reërected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat.*

# THE SPHINX WITHOUT A SECRET

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OSCAR WILDE

BORN: Dublin, October 15, 1856. DIED: Paris, November 30, 1900.

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ONE AFTERNOON I was sitting outside the *Cafe de la Paix*, watching the splendour and shabbiness of Parisian life, and wondering over my vermouth at the strange panorama of pride and poverty that was passing before me, when I heard someone call my name. I turned round, and saw Lord Murchison. We had not met since we had been at college together, nearly ten years before, so I was delighted to come across him again, and we shook hands warmly. At Oxford we had been great friends. I had liked him immensely, he was so handsome, so high-spirited, and so honourable. We used to say of him that he would be the best of fellows, if he did not always speak the truth, but I think we really admired him all the more for his frankness. I found him a good deal changed. He looked anxious and puzzled, and seemed to be in doubt about something. I felt it could not be modern scepticism, for Murchison was the stoutest of Tories, and believed in the Pentateuch as firmly as he believed in the House of Peers; so I concluded that it was a woman, and asked him if he was married yet.

"I don't understand women well enough," he answered.

"My dear Gerald," I said, "women are meant to be loved, not to be understood."

"I cannot love where I cannot trust," he replied.

"I believe you have a mystery in your life, Gerald," I exclaimed; "tell me about it."

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Written before 1891, when it was published in the collection called *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories*.

"Let us go for a drive," he answered, "it is too crowded here. No, not a yellow carriage, any other colour—there, that dark green one will do;" and in a few moments we were trotting down the boulevard in the direction of the Madeleine.

"Where shall we go to?" I said.

"Oh, anywhere you like!" he answered—"to the restaurant in the Bois; we will dine there, and you shall tell me all about yourself."

"I want to hear about you first," I said. "Tell me your mystery."

He took from his pocket a little silver-clasped morocco case, and handed it to me. I opened it. Inside there was the photograph of a woman. She was tall and slight, and strangely picturesque with her large vague eyes and loosened hair. She looked like a *clairvoyante*, and was wrapped in rich furs.

"What do you think of that face?" he said; "is it truthful?"

I examined it carefully. It seemed to me the face of someone who had a secret, but whether that secret was good or evil I could not say. Its beauty was a beauty moulded out of many mysteries—the beauty, in fact, which is psychological, not plastic—and the faint smile that just played across the lips was far too subtle to be really sweet.

"Well," he cried impatiently, "what do you say?"

"She is the *Gioconda* in sables," I answered. "Let me know all about her."

"Not now," he said; "after dinner," and began to talk of other things.

When the waiter brought us our coffee and cigarettes I reminded Gerald of his promise. He rose from his seat, walked two or three times up and down the room, and, sinking into an arm-chair, told me the following story:—

"One evening," he said, "I was walking down Bond Street about five o'clock. There was a terrific crush of carriages, and the traffic was almost stopped. Close to the pavement was standing a little yellow brougham, which, for some reason or other, attracted my attention. As I passed by there looked out from it the face I showed you this afternoon. It fascinated me immediately. All that night I kept thinking of it, and all the next day. I wandered up and down that wretched Row, peering into every

carriage, and waiting for the yellow brougham; but I could not find *ma belle inconnue*, and at last I began to think she was merely a dream. About a week afterwards I was dining with Madame de Rastail. Dinner was for eight o'clock; but at half-past eight we were still waiting in the drawing-room. Finally the servant threw open the door, and announced Lady Alroy. It was the woman I had been looking for. She came in very slowly, looking like a moonbeam in grey lace, and, to my intense delight, I was asked to take her in to dinner. After we had sat down, I remarked quite innocently, 'I think I caught sight of you in Bond Street some time ago, Lady Alroy.' She grew very pale, and said to me in a low voice, 'Pray do not talk so loud; you may be overheard.' I felt miserable at having made such a bad beginning, and plunged recklessly into the subject of the French plays. She spoke very little, always in the same low musical voice, and seemed as if she was afraid of someone listening. I fell passionately, stupidly in love, and the indefinable atmosphere of mystery that surrounded her excited my most ardent curiosity. When she was going away, which she did very soon after dinner, I asked her if I might call and see her. She hesitated for a moment, glanced round to see if anyone was near us, and then said, 'Yes; tomorrow at a quarter to five.' I begged Madame de Rastail to tell me about her; but all that I could learn was that she was a widow with a beautiful house in Park Lane, and as some scientific bore began a dissertation on widows, as exemplifying the survival of the matrimonially fittest, I left and went home.

"The next day I arrived at Park Lane punctual to the moment, but was told by the butler that Lady Alroy had just gone out. I went down to the club quite unhappy and very much puzzled, and after long consideration wrote her a letter, asking if I might be allowed to try my chance some other afternoon. I had no answer for several days, but at last I got a little note saying she would be at home on Sunday at four, and with this extraordinary postscript: 'Please do not write to me here again; I will explain when I see you.' On Sunday she received me, and was perfectly charming; but when I was going away she begged of me, if I ever had occasion to write to her again, to address my letter to 'Mrs. Knox, care of Whittaker's Library, Green Street.' 'There are

reasons,' she said, 'why I cannot receive letters in my own house.'

"All through the season I saw a great deal of her, and the atmosphere of mystery never left her. Sometimes I thought that she was in the power of some man, but she looked so unapproachable that I could not believe it. It was really very difficult for me to come to any conclusion, for she was like one of those strange crystals that one sees in museums, which are at one moment clear, and at another clouded. At last I determined to ask her to be my wife: I was sick and tired of the incessant secrecy that she imposed on all my visits, and on the few letters I sent her. I wrote to her at the library to ask her if she could see me the following Monday at six. She answered yes, and I was in the seventh heaven of delight. I was infatuated with her: in spite of the mystery, I thought then—in consequence of it, I see now. No; it was the woman herself I loved. The mystery troubled me, maddened me. Why did chance put me in its track?"

"You discovered it, then?" I cried.

"I fear so," he answered. "You can judge for yourself."

"When Monday came round I went to lunch with my uncle, and about four o'clock found myself in the Marylebone Road. My uncle, you know, lives in Regent's Park. I wanted to get to Piccadilly, and took a short cut through a lot of shabby little streets. Suddenly I saw in front of me Lady Alroy, deeply veiled and walking very fast. On coming to the last house in the street, she went up the steps, took out a latch-key, and let herself in. 'Here is the mystery,' I said to myself; and I hurried on and examined the house. It seemed a sort of place for letting lodgings. On the doorstep lay her handkerchief, which she had dropped. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. Then I began to consider what I should do. I came to the conclusion that I had no right to spy on her, and I drove down to the club. At six I called to see her. She was lying on a sofa, in a tea-gown of silver-tissue looped up by some strange moonstones that she always wore. She was looking quite lovely. 'I am so glad to see you,' she said; 'I have not been out all day.' I stared at her in amazement, and pulling that handkerchief out of my pocket, handed it to her. 'You dropped this in Cumnor Street this afternoon, Lady Alroy,' I said

very calmly. She looked at me in terror, but made no attempt to take the handkerchief. 'What right have you to question me?' she answered. 'The right of a man who loves you,' I replied; 'I came here to ask you to be my wife.' She hid her face in her hands, and burst into floods of tears. 'You must tell me,' I continued. She stood up, and, looking me straight in the face, said, 'Lord Murchison, there is nothing to tell you.'—'You went to meet someone,' I cried, 'this is your mystery.' She grew dreadfully white, and said, 'I went to meet no one.'—'Can't you tell the truth?' I exclaimed. 'I have told it,' she replied. I was mad, frantic; I don't know what I said, but I said terrible things to her. Finally I rushed out of the house. She wrote me a letter the next day; I sent it back unopened, and started for Norway with Alan Colville. After a month I came back, and the first thing I saw in the *Morning Post* was the death of Lady Alroy. She had caught a chill at the Opera, and had died in five days of congestion of the lungs. I shut myself up and saw no one. I had loved her so much, I had loved her so madly. Good God! how I had loved that woman!"

"You went to the street, to the house in it?" I said.

"Yes," he answered.

"One day I went to Cumnor Street. I could not help it; I was tortured with doubt. I knocked at the door, and a respectable-looking woman opened it to me. I asked her if she had any rooms to let. 'Well, sir,' she replied, 'the drawing-rooms are supposed to be let; but I have not seen the lady for three months, and as rent is owing on them, you can have them.'—'Is this the lady?' I said, showing the photograph. 'That's her, sure enough,' she exclaimed; 'and when is she coming back, sir?'—'The lady is dead,' I replied. 'Oh, sir, I hope not!' said the woman; 'she was my best lodger. She paid me three guineas a week merely to sit in my drawing-rooms now and then.'—'She met someone here?' I said; but the woman assured me that it was not so, that she always came alone, and saw no one. 'What on earth did she do here?' I cried. 'She simply sat in the drawing-room, sir, reading books, and sometimes had tea,' the woman answered. I did not know what to say, so I gave her a sovereign and went away. Now, what do you think it all meant? You don't believe the woman was telling the truth?"

"I do."

"Then why did Lady Alroy go there?"

"My dear Gerald," I answered, "Lady Alroy was simply a woman with a mania for mystery. She took these rooms for the pleasure of going there with her veil down, and imagining she was a heroine. She had a passion for secrecy, but she herself was merely a Sphinx without a secret."

"Do you really think so?"

"I am sure of it," I replied.

He took out the morocco case, opened it, and looked at the photograph. "I wonder?" he said at last.



## THE BEARS

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WSEWOLOD MICHAILOVICH GARSHIN

BORN: Russia, February, 1855. DIED: St. Petersburg, April, 1888.

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IN THE STEPPE the town of Bielsk nestles on the River Rokhla at a point where it makes several sharp curves linked up by bianch streams, the whole forming a net-work which, if looked at on a clear summer day from the lofty right bank of the channel through which the river runs here, resembles a gigantic bow of blue ribbon. At this point the bank rises some three hundred and fifty feet sheer above the level of the river as if it had been cut by a huge knife. So steep is it that to clamber from the water's edge to the top, where the limitless Steppe commences, is possible only by taking hold of the bushes of spindlewood, birch, and hazel thickly covering the face of the slope. From this summit a clear view of forty versts opens out on every side. On the right to the south and on the left to the north stretch the gradients of the right bank of the Rokhla, descending abruptly into valleys such as the one from above which we are gazing. Some of the ridges show up white with their chalk tops and naked sides destitute of soil. Others are covered for the most part with short and withered grass. In front to the east stretches the illimitable undulating Steppe, yellow with haystacks, over which some useless weed is growing thickly, or verdant with growing crops, here showing the dark purple-black of newly upturned fallow, there the silvery grey of feather-grass. Viewed from where we are standing, the Steppe appears level, and only the accustomed eye can trace on it the scarcely discernible lines of ridges, of invisible ravines and

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Written about 1877.

gullies. Here and there an old half-sunken tumulus meets the view, its sides sacrificed by the plough, and no longer possessed of its stone slab, now perhaps adorning the courtyard of the Kharkoff University, or perhaps taken away by some peasant, and now forming part of the wall of his cattle-yard.

Below, the winding river runs from north to south, alternately receding from its high bank into the Steppe or flowing immediately under its ledge, fringed at intervals with clusters of pine-trees and about the town by gardens and grazing-plots. At some distance from the bank to the side of the Steppe a strip of quicksand runs almost the entire length of the river, barely supporting the red and black shoots of small shrubs growing on it, and its thick carpet of fragrant lilac-coloured charbreets. Amongst these sands, two versts from the town, lies the cemetery, resembling from a distance a little oasis with the small wooden bell-tower of the cemetery chapel rising from its centre. The town itself presents no outstanding features, and is much like all district towns, apart from the astonishing cleanliness of its streets, due not so much to a solicitous municipal administration as to the sandy soil on which the town is built, which absorbs any moisture an incensed heaven may pour forth, and thereby places the town swine in great difficulties, compelling them to seek suitable accommodation for themselves at least two versts' distance from the town in the dirty banks of the river.

In September of 1857 the town of Bielsk was in a state of unwonted excitement. The usual routine of life was disturbed. Everywhere, whether in the Club, streets, or on the benches outside the gateway entrances of courtyards, indoors and outdoors, animated conversation was being carried on. It might have been supposed that the Zemstvo elections, which were taking place at this time, were the cause of disturbance; but there had been previous Zemstvo elections, and with all their scandals they had never produced any special impression on the native of Bielsk. On these occasions, if meeting in the street, the citizens would merely exchange brief remarks with each other.

"Have you been?" one would ask, indicating by a glance the building in which the Zemstvo offices were housed.

"Yes," would reply the other, with a gesture of his hand; and,

accustomed to this mode of expression of thoughts, the interrogator would understand and simply add:

"Who?"

"Ivan Petrovich."

"Whom?"

"Ivan Parfenovich."

Then they would both smile and part.

But now it was quite different. The town was in an uproar just as at fair-time. Crowds of urchins kept running backwards and forwards in the direction of the town common grazing-ground. Respectable, sober individuals in loose summer suits of alpaca silk were also wending their way thither, and the damsels of the town, with parasols and various coloured hoop-petticoats (they wore them in those days), occupying so much of the wide street that young Rogacheff, the merchant, driving a dapple grey, was obliged to draw in almost against the walls of the houses. The ladies were accompanied by the local cavaliers in grey overcoats with black velvet collars, carrying walking-canes and wearing straw hats or caps with cockades. Among these beaux were, of course, the brothers Isotoff, the leaders of all public gaieties, who knew how during a quadrille to call out "Grand Rond!" and "Au rebours!"—that is, when they were not running through the town imparting the latest news to their lady acquaintances.

"They have arrived from the Valuinsk District, and occupy half the ground of the Common right up to the river," said Leonid, the elder brother.

"I regarded the view from the summit of the eminence," added Constantine, the younger brother, who delighted in expressing himself in the most flowery language—"an entrancing picture!"

"Eminence" was the name he gave to the hill from which a view of the town and its vicinity could be obtained.

"Ah, what a good idea! Listen! I have a splendid idea. Let us order the lineika, and drive out to the eminence. It will be like a picnic, and we will watch from there."

This proposal by the first lady of Bielsk, the wife of the brother of the Treasurer (almost the whole town called her husband, Paul Ivanovich, the brother of the Treasurer), who had arrived eight years ago from Petersburg, and was therefore the authority on

fashions and good tone, met with general approval. The fat old bay horse was harnessed into the lineika, which is only met with in provincial capitals, and consists of long boards with two long seats so placed that the occupants, usually twelve in all, sit in two rows of six or seven a side and back to back. The party, which consisted of some dozen persons, seated themselves in the lineika, and started off through the town, overtaking mobs of boys, strings of damsels, and crowds of every description of public, all making their way to the Common. The lineika, having negotiated the sandy streets of the town, crossed the bridge and made for the steep right bank of the river. The bay, with dogged pace, wrinkling the sleek folds of his glossy haunches, clambered up the long slope, and in half an hour the picnickers were seated on the edge of the three hundred feet high ridge, with its overgrowth of bushes, gazing at the view with which we are already acquainted. Below, under their feet, immediately under this wall, the river was quietly flowing along its course, and behind it opened out the common on which the general attention was concentrated.

In the variety of colouring it resembled a huge patch-work carpet. The dull white of tents, numberless vehicles, and a motley crowd were all visible. Dark figures of men in kaftans and dirty grey shirts intermingled with the bright yellow and scarlet dresses of the women. A dense crowd surrounded the gipsy encampment which had been formed. It was a magnificent day, not too hot, and absolutely still. Above the roar of a multitudinous crowd could be heard the ring of sledge-hammers on iron, the neighing of horses, and the roar of scores of tame bears—the mainstay of the gipsics who had brought them hither out of the neighboring Districts.

Olga Pavlona gazed at this kaleidoscope through binoculars, and went into raptures.

"How interesting it all is! What a big one! Look, Leonid, what a huge bear there on the right! And the young gipsy alongside it—a perfect Adonis!"

She handed the glasses to the young man, who through them saw the figure of a well-built and exceedingly dirty youth who was standing near and petting a beast which kept shuffling about and changing from one leg on to another.

"Allow me to look," said a stout, clean-shaven man in a duck suit and straw hat. For some time he looked attentively through the glasses, and then, turning to Olga Pavlona, said with a deep sigh: "Ye-es, Olga Pavlona, an Adonis. But this Adonis will turn out a first-class horse-thief."

Olga Pavlona uttered an exclamation of impatience.

"Why," said she, "do you always try to turn everything poetical into prose? Why a horse-thief? I will not believe it! He looks so good!"

"That may be, but how is he going to support his beautiful body without that bear? To-morrow they are slaughtering all these bears, and one-half of all the gipsies in this encampment will be without a living."

"They can work as blacksmiths and shoeing-smiths, tell fortunes . . ."

"Tell fortunes! Ilia, the horse-doctor, came to me yesterday. You go and talk with him. 'Thomas Thomasovich,' he said, 'those greys of yours are very good, only beware of our brother.' 'What!' I said; 'surely you will not steal them?' He smiled, the blackguard! Tell fortunes! Those are the sort of fortunes he is telling!"

Out of the lineika they took a large basket, from which appeared eatables and drinks, and the company began to seat themselves in groups, chatting merrily the while, and scarcely paying any attention to the picture displayed at their feet. The sun had set, and the gigantic shadow of the height quickly spread to the Common, town, and Steppe. Outlines softened, and, as happens in the South, day was quickly replaced by night. Lights began to flicker in the town, and fires were lighted in the camp, which showed up redly through the mist rising from the slumbering river below, the distant bends of which glistened in the cold moonlight. And above the river, on the height itself, Constantine and Leonid kept up a ceaseless flow of ridiculous stories, at which Olga Pavlona occasionally smiled with condescension, and the younger ladies of the party giggled or even laughed aloud. Candles protected by glass shades were lighted, and the coachman with the maid prepared the samovar in the bushes near by—a process apparently necessitating occasional, but at the same time very cautious, squeaks on the part of the maid. Portly Thomas

Thomasovich alone remained silent, and finally interrupted Leonid at the most interesting point of one of his anecdotes.

"When, then, have they finally decided to have this slaughter of bears?" said he.

"Wednesday morning," said the brothers Isotoff simultaneously.

The unhappy gipsies had journeyed hither from four Districts of the Government with all their household effects, horses, bears, etc. More than a hundred of these awkward beasts, ranging from tiny cubs to huge "old men" whose coats had become grey or whitish from age, had collected on the town Common. The gipsies awaited the fatal day with terror. Those who had been the first to arrive had already been encamped here more than a fortnight. The Authorities were waiting until all should arrive, so that the business of killing the bears might be carried out in one day and finished with once and for all. The gipsies had been given five years' grace from the publication of the Order prohibiting performing bears, and now this period had expired. They were now to appear at specified places and themselves destroy their supporters.

They had completed their last round through the villages with the familiar goat and big drum—the invariable companions of the bears. For the last time, having espied them afar off coming down from the Steppe into the steep gully and bank of the river, the usual site of Little Russian villages, a crowd of boys and girls had run a verst to meet them, returning triumphantly with them, a confused rabble, back to the village, where the fun of the fair had already commenced. And what fun it was! What festivities took place! They would halt by the inn or some bigger house, or if it was an estate before the proprietor's house, and begin their performances, cures, trade, barter, fortune-telling, horse-shoeing, and repairs of waggons, continuing right throughout the long summer day until the evening, when the gipsies would leave the village for the cattle-grazing ground, and, setting up their tents or simply stretching the canvas over the shafts of the waggons, would light their fires and prepare supper, whilst far into the night an inquisitive crowd would stand around the encampment.

"Come along now; it is time to go home," my father would say to me, a little boy, but no less unwilling to leave, would wait

in response to my entreaties for "just a little longer—a little longer." Together we would sit in the cart, the old horse Vasia, with his head turned towards the fires and ears pricked towards the bears, standing quietly, save for an occasional snort. The fires of the camp cast dancing red lights and vague trembling shadows. A light mist was rising from the ravine to the side of us, whilst behind the camp stretched the Steppe. The dark wings of a wind-mill stood out as if painted against the sky, and behind it was limitless mysterious space enfolded in a silvery twilight. Amidst the din of the encampment could be heard those subdued sounds so characteristic of the Steppe at night. First from some distant pond would come the solemn reverberating chorus of frogs, then the regular but hurried chirrup of the grass-hopper and the cry of the quail. Again, faint, indistinguishable harmonious sounds would be wafted to our ears—mayhap the sound of some distant bell borne on the breeze, or the voice of Nature, whose tongue we do not understand.

But in the encampment all is becoming quiet. Gradually fires are extinguished. The bears under the carts to which they are tethered growl deeply from time to time, as with a jingling of their chains they restlessly change their position. Their owners, too, are settling down to sleep. One of them in an uncultivated tenor is singing a strange song in his native language, unlike the songs of Moscow restaurant gipsies and operatic singers—a song characteristic, wild, mournful, strange to the ear. No one knows when it was composed, what Steppe, forest or mountain gave it birth. It has remained a living testimony of a land forgotten even by those who sing it now under the burning stars of a foreign sky and in alien Steppes.

"Come along," says my father. Vasia bravely starts, and the droshky wends its way along the winding road below into the valley. A thin dust rises half-heartedly from under the wheels, and then, as if also overcome with sleep, falls back on to the dewy grass.

"Papa, does anyone know gipsy?"

"The gipsies themselves, of course, do, but I have never met others who could speak to them."

"I should like to learn it. I should like to know what he was singing about. Papa, are they heathens? Perhaps he was singing about his gods, how they lived and fought."

We arrived home, and as I lie under the coverlet my imagination still works and forms strange fancies in the little head already on the pillow.

Now, bears no longer wander through the villages, and even the gipsies themselves seldom wander. The greater number of them live where they have been told to live, and only occasionally pay tribute to their century-old instincts, select some common, stretch their smoky canvas, and live whole families together, busy with the shocing of horses, horse-curing, and dealing. I have even seen how tents have given place to hastily erected wooden shelters. This was in the provincial capital not far from the hospital and the fair-ground, on a piece of land as yet unbuilt on and running alongside the main road. On this plot the gipsies had built quite a little town. Only the swarthy faces, quick-glancing eyes, curly hair and dirty clothes of the men, with the equally dirty, gaudy rags of the women and the naked bronzed children, reminded me of the former picture of a wandering gipsy encampment. The clang of iron was coming from these shelters, and I looked into one of them. An old man was making horseshoes. I looked at his work, and saw that this man was no longer a gipsy blacksmith, but an ordinary workman who had taken some order, and was working as quickly as possible to finish it so as to take up a new job. He was forging shoe after shoe, throwing them one after another into a heap in a corner of the shanty. He was working with a gloomy concentrated air, and at a great rate. This was in the daytime. Going past late that night, I went up to the shelter, and saw the old man still at the same work. It was a factory. And it was strange to see a gipsy encampment almost in the heart of the town situated between the Zemstvo hospital, the bazaar, and some kind of enclosed square where soldiers were being drilled, and from which came the sound of sharp orders given by the instructors. It was alongside a road from which the wind was raising clouds of dust, smothering with it the boarded shelters and the fires with their pots, in which the women-kind, their heads adorned with gaudy handkerchiefs, were boiling some sort of gruel.

They had gone through the villages giving their shows for the last time. For the last time the bears had displayed their histrionic talents, had danced, wrestled, showed how little boys steal the peas, imitated the mincing step of the young girl and the waddling



gait of the old woman. For the last time they had received their reward in the form of a tumbler of vodka, which the bear, standing on its hind-legs, would seize with both front paws, place against his shaggy muzzle, and, throwing his head back, pour the contents down his throat, after which he would lick his jaws and express his satisfaction in a quiet rumble and strange deep sighs. For the last time old men and women were coming to the gipsies to be cured of their ailments by the true and tried process of lying on the ground under a bear, which would place his belly on the patient, spread himself out on all fours, and remain in this position until the gipsies considered the seance had lasted long enough. For the last time they had entered huts, when, if the bear voluntarily entered, he was led into the front portion of the dwelling, and all sat there and rejoiced at his graciousness as a good omen, but if, in spite of all entreaties and caresses he refused to cross the threshold, the occupants would be sorrowful, and their neighbours would shake their heads.

The greater part of the gipsies had come from the Western Districts, so that they were obliged to descend into Bielsk by a long hill nearly two versts long, and, seeing from a distance the site of their coming misfortune—this little town with its thatched and iron roofs and two or three bell-towers—the women commenced to wail, the children to cry, and the bears from sympathy, or perhaps—who knows?—understanding from their masters the bitter fate in store for them, to roar in such a way that carts which met them turned aside from the road so that the bullocks and horses should not be frightened, whilst the dogs with yelps of alarm crawled under the carts, taking refuge behind the grease and tar-pots which the peasants of these parts fasten under the body of their carts.

Several of the old men amongst the gipsies had collected at the entrance gates of the house in which the ispravnik of Bielsk resided. They had decked themselves out so as to present a respectable appearance before the Authorities. All wore black or dark blue under-tunics, and belts brocaded with silver and black enamel-work, silk shirts having a narrow piping of gold lace round the collar, plush trousers, high boots which in some cases were embroidered and slashed with a pattern, and the majority wore

astrachan caps. This dress was worn only on the most solemn occasions.

"Is he asleep?" inquired a tall, upright gipsy, tanned from age, of a gorodovoi who came out of the courtyard—one of the eleven gorodovois entrusted with the preservation of law and order in the town of Bielsk.

"He is getting up—is dressing. He will send for you soon," replied the gorodovoi.

The old men, who up till now had been sitting or standing motionless, began to move and to speak in low tones amongst themselves. The senior of them drew something out of the pocket of his baggy trousers; the remainder all collected around him and looked at the object which he held in his hands.

"Nothing will come of it," he said at last. "What, indeed, can he do? It is not his doing. It is the Minister at Petersburg who has given the order. They are killing the bears everywhere."

"We will try, Ivan. Perhaps he can do something," said another of the old men.

"Of course we can try," replied Ivan dismally. "Only he will take our money and will not help in any way."

The ispravnik sent for them. They went in a crowd into the entrance-hall, and when he came out to them—a whiskered man in an unbuttoned police uniform, which exposed a red silk shirt—the old man fell at his feet. They implored his assistance, offered him money, and many of them wept.

"Your Worship," said Ivan, "will himself judge what is to happen to us. What will become of us? We had bears; we lived quietly, insulted no one. Amongst us are young men who engage in evil work, but are there not horse-thieves amongst the Russians? No one was insulted by our beasts, Your Worship; they amused all. Now what is going to happen to us, Your Worship? We must go into the world, and if not thieves, must be vagabonds. Our fathers, our grandfathers, Your Worship, led bears around. We do not know how to plough the land; we are all blacksmiths. It has been hard work travelling the wide world over as blacksmiths in search of work, and now work will not come of itself to us. Our young men will become horse-thieves—nothing else to do, Your Worship. Before God I speak frankly, concealing nothing.

A great evil has been done us and good people by taking away our bears from us. Perhaps you will help us. God will reward you for it. Kind sir, help us!"

The old man fell on his knees and prostrated himself at the feet of the ispravnik. The others followed suit. The Major stood with a gloomy expression on his face, smoothing his long moustaches with one hand and the other thrust into the pocket of his dark blue overalls.

The old man pulled out a bulging pocket-book and offered it to him.

"I will not take it," said the ispravnik surlily. "I can do nothing."

"But if you will take it, Your Worship," said the crowd, "perhaps something—if you would write."

"I will not take it," repeated the ispravnik more loudly than before. "On no account. It is useless. It is the law. You were given five years' grace. What can be done?" And he made a motion with his hands. The old men remained silent. The ispravnik continued: "I know what a misfortune this is for all of you—and to us. Now we shall have to look out for our horses, but what can I do? You, old man, put away your money. I will not take it. If I have to give you trouble through your children over horses do not be angry with me, but to take money for nothing is not one of my customs. Put it away—put it away, old man; your money will be useful to you."

"Your Worship," said Ivan, still holding the pocket-book in his hands, "be so good as to give the order for the slaughter. Please to-morrow"—the old man's voice trembled—"please to-morrow finish it. We are tired, worn out. Two weeks ago I came here with mine. We have lived quite——"

"There is still one lot to come in, old man," broke in the ispravnik. "We must wait. It must be done all at one time, and finished. The whole town has gone off its head over you all."

"They have arrived already, Your Worship. As we came to Your Excellency they were coming down the hill. Do us this kindness, sir. Do not torment us!"

"Well, if they have arrived, then to-morrow at ten o'clock I will come to you. Have you guns?"

"We have guns, but not all of us."

"All right, I will tell the Colonel to lend you some rifles. God be with you! I am sorry, very sorry for you all!"

The old men turned towards the door, but the ispravnik called them back.

"Wait a moment," he said. "I will tell you something. Go to the chemist's shop next to the church. Go and say I sent you. The chemist will buy all the bears'-fat from you; he will make it into pomade. Perhaps he will buy the skins, too. He will give you a good price. He will not lose by it."

The gipsies thanked him, and in a crowd trooped off to the chemist's shop. Their hearts were torn; almost without bargaining they sold the mortal remains of their old friends. Thomas Thomasovich bought all the fat at fourteen kopecks a pood, and promised to speak about the skins later on. The young merchant, Rogacheff, who happened to be there, bought all the bear-hams at five kopecks a pound, hoping to make a good deal out of the transaction.

In the evening of that day the brothers Isotoff rushed breathless to the house of the brother of the Treasurer.

"Olga Pavlona! Olga Pavlona! they have settled it for to-morrow! All have arrived! The Colonel has already given out the rifles!" they shouted, vying against each other in their haste to tell the news. "Thomas Thomasovich has bought all the fat at fourteen kopecks a pood, and Rogacheff the hams, and—"

"Stop, stop, Leonid!" interrupted Olga Pavlona. "Why has Thomas Thomasovich bought the fat?"

"For ointment, pomade. It is a splendid thing for making the hair grow." And forthwith Constantine related an interesting anecdote of how a certain bald gentleman, through rubbing his head with bears'-fat, even grew hair on his hands.

"And he was forced to shave them every two days," added Leonid; and then the two brothers burst out laughing.

Olga Pavlona smiled and pondered over the news. She had long worn a chignon, and this information about bears'-grease interested her very much. When that same evening Thomas Thomasovich came round to play cards with her husband and the Treasurer, she cleverly succeeded in making him promise to send her some bears' ointment.

"Of course—of course, Olga Pavlona," he had said, "and it shall be scented. Which do you prefer—patchouli or ylang-ylang?"

The day broke cloudy and cold—a genuine September day—with an occasional slight drizzle, but this notwithstanding, numbers of both sexes and of all ages went to the Common to see the interesting spectacle. The town was almost deserted. All the vehicles the town boasted of—one carriage, several phaetons, droshkies, and lineikas—were engaged in taking out the curious. They left them at the encampment, and returned for fresh loads. By ten o'clock all were already out there.

The gipsies had lost all hopes. There was not much noise in the camp. The women were hiding in the tents with the little ones, so as not to see the massacre, and only occasionally a despairing wail was wrung from one or another of them. The men were feverishly making the last preparations. They had dragged the waggons to the edge of the camping-ground, and had tied the bears to them.

The ispravnik, with Thomas Thomasovich, passed along the rows of condemned. The bears themselves were not altogether calm. The unusual surroundings, the strange preparations, the enormous crowd, the large number of bears collected together—all this had excited them and they tugged or gnawed at their chains, uttering occasional low growls. Old Ivan stood near his enormous bear crooked with age. His son, an elderly gipsy whose black hair was already streaked with silvery grey, and his grandson—that same Adonis whom Olga Pavlona had noticed—with ghastly faces and burning eyes were hastily tying up the bear.

The ispravnik came up level with the trio.

"Well, old man," said he, "tell them to commence."

A wave of excited expectation passed over the crowd of on-lookers, conversation redoubled, but soon after all became quiet, and amidst a profound silence was heard a low but authoritative voice. Old Ivan was speaking.

"Allow me, sir, to speak." Then, turning to his fellow-gipsies, he continued: "Comrades, I beg you to let me be the first to finish. I am older than any of you. Next year I shall have seen ninety years. I have led bears from my infancy, and in the whole camp there is no bear older than mine."

He lowered his grey curly head on to his chest, shaking it sorrowfully from side to side, and wiped his eyes with his fist. Then he drew himself up, raised his head, and continued in a louder, firmer voice than before:

"Therefore I want to be the first. I thought I should not live to see such grief. I thought—that my bear, my loved one, would not live, but apparently Fate has willed otherwise. With my own hand I must kill him, my provider and benefactor. Loose him; let him be free. He will not go away; he, as with us old men, will not flee from death. Loose him, Vasia! I do not wish to kill him bound, as they kill cattle. Do not be afraid," said he, turning to the crowd, which showed signs of alarm; "he will not move."

The youth freed the huge beast, and led him a short distance away from the waggon. The bear sat on his haunches, letting his front paws hang loosely, and swayed from side to side, breathing heavily and hoarsely. He was very old, his teeth were yellow, his coat had grown a reddish colour and was falling out. He gazed in a friendly but melancholy manner at his old master with his one small eye. All around was an absolute silence, broken only by the noise of the ramrods against the barrels of the rifles as the wads were pressed home.

"Give me the gun," said the old man firmly.

His son gave him the rifle. He took it, and pressing the muzzle against the old animal's breast, again began to address the bear:

"I am going to kill thee in a minute, Potap. God grant that my old hand may not tremble, and that the bullet may find its way into thy very heart. I do not want to torture thee. Thou dost not deserve such, my old bear, my good, my kind old mate. I caught thee a little cub. One of thy eyes had gone, thy nose was rotting from the ring, thou wert suffering from consumption. I tended thee as a son, and pitied thee, and thou grew up a big and powerful bear. There is not such another in all the camps which have collected here. And thou grew up and did not forget my kindness. Never have I had such a friend amongst men such as thou hast been. Thou hast been kind and quiet and clever, and hast learnt all. Never have I seen a beast kinder, more clever than thou. What would I have been without thee? My whole family have lived by thy labour. Thou hast bought me two troikas. It was

thou who built me a hut for the winter. Thou hast done yet more for me. Thou saved my son from being a soldier. Ours is a large family, but all, from the oldest to the youngest, thou hast supported up till now. And I have loved thee greatly, and have not beaten thee too much, and if I have in any way offended against thee, forgive me. At thy feet I bow."

He threw himself at the bear's feet. The beast quietly and plaintively growled. The old man lay on the ground, his whole body quivering convulsed with sobs.

"Shoot, daddy," said his son. "Do not tear our hearts!"

Ivan rose. The tears no longer flowed. He threw back the grey mane which had fallen over his brow, and continued in a steady, resounding voice:

"And now I must kill thee. They have ordered me, an old man, to shoot thee with my own hands. Thou must no longer live on this earth. Why? May God in Heaven judge us!"

He cocked the trigger, and with a firm, steady hand aimed at the beast's heart under the left paw. And the beast understood. A pitiful, heart-rending sound broke from the bear. He stood up on his hind-legs, and raised his fore-paws as if to hide his face with them from the terrifying gun. A wail went up from the gipsies; in the crowd many were openly crying. With a sob the old man threw aside the rifle, and fell senseless to the ground. His son rushed forward to pick him up, and the grandson seized the gun.

"It must be," he cried in a wild, hysterical voice, with blazing eyes. "Enough! Shoot, comrades; let us end it!" And, running up to the beast, he placed the muzzle of the rifle against the bear's ear and fired. The bear fell to the ground a lifeless mass. Only his paws moved convulsively, and his jaw dropped as if yawning. Throughout the encampment rang out shots and the despairing cries of the women and children. A light breeze carried the smoke towards the river.

"One has got loose—broken loose!" resounded through the crowd, and, like a flock of frightened sheep, all rushed helter-skelter. The ispravnik, fat Thomas Thomasovich, urchins, Leonid and Constantine, young ladies—all fled, panic-stricken, running into the tents, against the carts and waggons, screeching and

falling over each other. Olga Pavlona almost fainted, but fear gave her strength, and, picking up her petticoats, she fled along the Common, regardless of the disordered state of her costume caused by such hasty flight. The horses, harnessed up in anticipation of the return of their owners to town, commenced to get out of control, and bolted in various directions. But the danger was by no means great. A still quite young brown bear, maddened by fright, with a broken chain hanging from his neck, was running away with astonishing rapidity. Everyone and everything made way in front of him, and, like the wind, he fled straight into the town. Some of the gipsies, rifles in hand, were running after him. The few pedestrians who chanced to be in the streets pressed themselves against the walls if too late to take refuge in gateways. Shutters were bolted, everything living hid, even the dogs disappeared.

Past the church went the bear, and up the main street, sometimes rushing to one or the other side as if seeking a place in which to hide, but everywhere was bolted. As he flashed past the shops he was met with fiendish cries from the shopmen and boys who wished to frighten him. He fled past the bank, the school, and barracks, to the other end of the town, rushed along the road leading to the bank of the river, and stopped. His pursuers were out-distanced. But soon after a crowd, no longer composed of gipsies only, appeared from the street. The ispravnik and the Colonel were in a droshky with rifles in their hands. The gipsies and a squad of soldiers were following behind them at the double. Alongside the droshky ran Leonid and Constantine.

"There he is! there he is!" cried out the ispravnik. "The deuce take him!"

A volley of shots followed. One of the bullets grazed the bear, and in mortal fright he fled faster than ever. A verst from the town, up the Rokhla, whither the bear was running, is a large water-mill, surrounded on all sides by a small but thick wood. The animal made for this wood, but, becoming confused in the branches of the river and the dams, lost his way. A wide expanse of water separated him from the dense overgrowth, where he could perhaps find, if not safety, at least respite. But he decided not to swim. On this side there was a species of bush which



grows thickly, and is only found in Southern Russia. Its long, supple, branchless stalks grow so closely together that it is impossible for anyone to make his way through it, but at its roots there are corners and bare patches into which dogs can crawl, and as they often do this to escape from the heat when the weather is warm, and widen the paths leading to them by the pressure of their flanks on the bushes, a whole labyrinth of passages is formed. It was into this undergrowth the bear rushed. The mill men, who were watching from the upper story of the mill, saw this, and when the breathless, exhausted chase arrived, the *ispravnik* ordered the bear's hiding-place to be surrounded.

The unfortunate animal forced its way into the very depth of the bushes. The wound made by the bullet was very painful. He rolled himself into a ball, buried his muzzle in his paws, and lay motionless, deafened by the noise, mad with fright, and deprived of the possibility of defending himself. The soldiers fired into the bushes, hoping by chance to touch him and make him roar, but to hit, firing at random, is difficult. They killed him late that evening, having smoked him out of his shelter by setting fire to the bushes. Everyone who had a rifle thought it his bounden duty to plant a bullet into the dying beast, so that when they skinned it the skin was useless.

Not long ago I chanced to be in Bielsk. The town has scarcely changed. Only the bank has smashed, and the school is now larger and of a higher grade. They have changed the *ispravnik*, who was given promotion as *pristaff* in a provincial capital for zealous service. The brothers Isotoff, as of old, shout "Grand rond!" and "Au rebours!" and run about the town relating the last piece of gossip. The chemist, Thomas Thomasovich, has grown even fatter, and notwithstanding that he made a good thing out of the purchase of the bears'-fat at fourteen kopecks per pound by selling it at eighty kopecks, which brought him in all no small sum, even now speaks with disapproval of the slaughter of the bears.

"I said then to Olga Pavlona that through it her Adonis would become a horse-thief . . . and what happened? Less than a week afterwards he stole my pair of greys, the blackguard!"

"And do you know it was he who stole them?"

"Who else could it have been? Last year they tried him for horse-stealing and robbery. He was sent to penal servitude."

"Ah, how sorry I was for him!" said Olga Pavlona sorrowfully.

The poor lady has grown decidedly older these last years, and notwithstanding the fact, according to Thomas Thomasovich, who told me in confidence, that she has smeared her head with four pounds of bears'-grease, her hair has not only not become thicker, but even grown thinner. But her chignon hides it so well that it is absolutely unnoticeable.

# THE YOUNG IMMIGRUNTS

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RING LARDNER

BORN: Niles, Michigan, March 6, 1885.

DIED: East Hampton, L. I., September 25, 1933

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THE PERSON whose name is signed to this novel was born on the nineteenth day of August, 1915, and was therefore four years and three months old when the manuscript was found, late in November, 1919. The narrative is substantially true, with the following exceptions:

1. "My Father," the leading character in the work, is depicted as a man of short temper, whereas the person from whom the character was drawn is in reality as pleasant a fellow as one would care to meet and seldom has a cross word for anyone, let alone women and children.

2. The witty speeches accredited to "My Father" have, possibly owing to the limitations of a child's memory, been so garbled and twisted that they do not look half so good in print as they sounded in the open air.

3. More stops for gas were made than are mentioned in the story.

As the original manuscript was written on a typewriter with a rather frayed ribbon, and as certain words were marked out and others handwritten in, I have taken the liberty of copying the entire work with a fresh ribbon and the inclusion of the changes which the author indicated in pencil in the first draft. Otherwise the story is presented to the reader exactly as it was first set down.

THE FATHER.

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Written in 1920, published in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

My parents are both married and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of them are very good looking. The balance is tall and skinny and has a swarty complexion with moles but you hardly ever notice them on account of your gaze being rapped up in his feet which would be funny if brevity wasnt the soul of wit. Everybody says I have his eyes and I am glad it didn't half to be something else tho Rollie Zeider the ball player calls him owl eyes for a nick name but if I was Rollie Zeider and his nose I wouldn't pick on somebodys else features.

He wears pretty shirts which he bought off of another old ball player Artie Hofman to attract tension off of his feet and must of payed a big price for them I have heard my ant tell my uncle when they thortght I was a sleep down to the lake tho I guess he pays even more for his shoes if they sell them by the frunt foot.

I was born in a hospittle in Chicago 4 years ago and liked it very much and had no idear we were going to move till 1 day last summer I heard my mother arsk our nurse did she think she could get along O. K. with myself and 3 brothers John Jimmie and David for 10 days wilst she and my old man went east to look for a costly home.

Well yes said our nurse barshfully.

I may as well exclaim to the reader that John is 7 and Jimmie is 5 and I am 4 and David is almost nothing as yet you might say and tho I was named for my father they call me Bill thank god.

The conversation amungst my mother and our nurse took place right after my father came back from Toledo where Jack Dempsey knocked Jessie Willard for a gool tho my father liked the big fellow and bet on him.

David was in his bath at the time and my mother and our nurse and myself and 2 elder brothers was standing around admireing him tho I notice that when the rest of the famly takes their bath they don't make open house of the occasion.

Well my parents went east and dureing their absents myself and brothers razed hell with David on the night shift but when they come back my mother said to the nurse were they good boys.

Fine replid our nurse lamely and where are you going to live.

Connecticut said my mother.

Our nurse forced a tired smile.

Here we will leave my parents to unpack and end this chapter.

We spent the rest of the summer on my grandmother in Indiana and my father finley went to the worst series to write it up as he has followed sports of all sorts for years and is a expert so he bet on the wite sox and when he come home he acted rarthar cross.

Well said my mother simperingly I suppose we can start east now.

We will start east when we get good and ready said my father with a lordly sneeze.

The next thing was how was we going to make the trip as my father had boughten a new car that the cheepest way to get it there was drive it besides carrying a grate deal of our costly bagage but if all of us went in it they would be no room left for our costly bagage and besides 2 of my brothers always acts like devils incarnite when they get in a car so my mother said to our nurse.

If you think you can manage the 2 older boys and David on the train myself and husband will take Bill in the car said my mother to our nurse.

Fine replid our nurse with a gastly look witch my mother did not see.

Myself and parents left Goshen Indiana on a fine Monday morning leaveing our nurse and brothers to come latter in the weak on the railway. Our plans was to reach Detroit that night and stop with my uncle and ant and the next evening take the boat to Buffalo and thence to Connecticut by motor so the first town we past through was Middlebury.

Elmer Flick the old ball player use to live here said my father modestly.

My mother forced a smile and soon we were acrost the Michigan line and my mother made the remark that she was thirsty.

We will stop at Coldwater for lunch said my father with a strate face as he pulls most of his lines without changeing expressions.

Sure enough we puled up to 1 side of the road just after leaveing Coldwater and had our costly viands of frid chicken and doughnuts and milk fernished by my grate ant and of witch I partook freely.

We will stop at Ypsilanti for supper said my father in calm tones that is where they have the state normal school.

I was glad to hear this and hoped we would get there before dark as I had always wanted to come in contact with normal people and see what they are like and just at dusk we entered a large size town and drove past a large size football field.

Heavens said my mother this must be a abnormal school to have such a large football field.

My father wore a queer look.

This is not Ypsilanti this is Ann Arbor he cried.

But I thought you said we would go south of Ann Arbor and direct to Ypsilanti said my mother with a smirk.

I did say that but I thought I would surprise you by coming into Ann Arbor replied my father with a terse jesture.

Personally I think the surprise was unanimous.

Well now we are here said my mother we might as well look up Bill.

Bill is my uncle Bill so we stopped at the Alfa Delt house and got him and took him down to the hotel for supper and my old man called up Mr. Yost the football coach of the Michigan football team and he come down and visited with us.

What kind of a team have you got coach said my father lamely.

I have got a determined team replied Mr. Yost they are determined to not play football.

At this junction my unlucky mother changed the subject to the league of nations and it was 10 o'clock before Mr. Yost come to a semi colon so we could resume our journey and by the time we past through Ypsilanti the people was not only subnormal but unconscious. It was nearly midnight when we pulled up in front of my aunts and uncles house in Detroit that had been setting up since 7 expecting us.

Were sorry to be so late said my mother bruskiy.

Were awfully glad you could come at all replied my aunt with a ill concealed yawn.

We will now leave my relatives to get some sleep and end this chapter.

The boat leaves Detroit every afternoon at 5 o'clock and reaches

Buffalo the next morning at 9 tho I would better exclaim to my readers that when it is 9 oclock in Buffalo it is only 8 oclock in Goshen for instants as Buffalo people are queer.

Well said my father the next morning at brekfus I wander what time we half to get the car on board of the boat.

I will find out down town and call up and let you know replid my uncle who is a engineer and digs soors or something.

Sure enough he called up durement the fornoon and said the car must be on the board of the boat at 3 oclock so my father left the house at 2 oclock and drove down to the worf tho he had never drove a car in Detroit before but has nerves of steal. Latter my uncle come out to his home and took myself and mother and ant down to the worf where my old man was waiting for us haveing put the car on the board.

What have you been doing ever since 3 oclock arsked my mother as it was now nerly 5.

Haveing a high ball my father replid.

I thortht Detroit was dry said my mother shyly.

Did you said my father with a rye smile and as it was now nerly time for the boat to leave we said good by to my uncle and ant and went on the boat. A messenger took our costly baggage and put it away wilst myself and parents went out on the porch and set looking at the people on the worf. Suddenly they was a grate hub bub on the worf and a young man and lady started up the gangs plank wilst a big crowd throwed rice and old shoes at them and made a up roar.

Bride and glum going to Niagara Falls said my father who is well travelled and seams to know everything.

Instantly the boat give a blarst on the wistle and I started with surprise.

Did that scare you Bill said my father and seamed to enjoy it and I suppose he would of laughed out right had I fell overboard and been drowned in the narsty river water.

Soon we were steeming up the river on the city of Detroit 3.

That is Canada over there is it not said my mother.

What did you think it was the Austrian Tyrol replid my father explodeing a cough. Durement our progress up the river I noticed seveal funny things flotting in the water with lanterns hanging on

them and was wandering what they could be when my mother said they seem to have plenty of boys.

They have got nothing on us replid my father quick as a flash.

A little latter who should come out on the porch and set themselves ner us but the bride and glum.

Oh I said to myself I hope they will talk so as I can hear them as I have always wandered what newly-weds talk about on their way to Niagara Falls and soon my wishs was relized.

Some night said the young glum are you warm enough.

I am perfectly comfertible replid the fare bride tho her looks belid her words what time do we arive in Buffalo.

9 oclock said the lordly glum are you warm enough.

I am perfectly comfertible replied the fare bride what time do we arrive in Buffalo.

9 oclock said the lordly glum I am afrade it is too cold for you out here.

Well maybe it is replid the fare bride and without farther adieu they went in the spaciou parlors.

I wander will he be arsking her 8 years from now is she warm enough said my mother with a faint grimace.

The weather may change before then replid my father.

Are you warm enough said my father after a slite pause.

No was my mothers catchy reply.

Well said my father we arive in Buffalo at 9 oclock and with that we all went inside as it was now pitch dark and had our supper and retired and when we rose the next morning and drest and had brekfus we puled up to the worf in Buffalo and it was 9 oclock so I will leave the city of Detroit 3 tide to the worf and end this chapter.

As we was leaving the boat who should I see right along side of us but the fare bride and the lordly glum.

We are right on the dot said the glum looking at his costly watch it is just 9 oclock and so they past out of my life.

We had to wait qite a wile wilst the old man dug up his bill of loading and got the costly moter.

We will half to get some gas he said I wonder where they is a garage.



No sooner had the words fell from his lips when a man with a flagrant Adams apple handed him a card with the name of a garage on it.

Go up Genesee st 5 blks and turn to the left or something said the man with the apple.

Soon we reached the garage and had the gas tank filled with gas it was 27 cents in Buffalo and soon we was on our way to Rochester. Well these are certainly grate roads said my father barshfully.

They have lots better roads in the east than out west replid my mother with a knowing wink.

The roads all through the east are better than out west remarked my father at lenth.

These are wonderfull replid my mother smuggling me vs her arm.

The time past quickly with my parents in so jocular a mood and all most before I knew it we was on the outer skirts of Batavia.

What town is this quired my mother in a tolerant voice.

Batavia husked my father sloughing down to 15 miles per hour.

Well maybe we would better stop and have lunch here said my mother coyly.

We will have lunch in Rochester replid my father with a loud cough.

My mother farced a smile and it was about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 12 when we arived in Rochester and soon we was on Genesee st and finley stoped in front of a elegant hotel and shared a costly lunch.

Wilst particpateing in the lordly viands my father halled out his map and give it the up and down.

Look at here he said at lenth they seams to be a choice of 2 main roads between here and Syracuse but 1 of them gos way up north to Oswego wilst the other gos way south to Geneva where as Syracuse is strate east from here you might say so it looks to me like we would save both millage and time if we was to drive strate east through Lyons the way the railway gos.

Well I dont want to ride on the ties said my mother with a loud cough.

Well you dont half to because they seams to be a little road that gos strate through replid my father removeing a flys cadaver from the costly farina.

Well you would better stick to the main roads said my mother tacklessly.

Well you would better stick to your own business replid my father with a pungent glance.

Soon my father had payed the check and gave the waiter a lordly bribe and once more we sprang into the machine and was on our way. The lease said about the results of my fathers grate idear the soonest mended in a word it turned out to be a h olvcost of the first water as after we had covered miles and miles of ribald roads we suddenly came to a abrupt conclusion vs the side of a stagnant freight train that was stone deaf to honks. My father set there for nerly ½ a hour reciteing the 4 Horses of the Apoplex in a under tone but finley my mother mustard up her curage and said affectedly why dont we turn around and go back somewheres. I cant spell what my father replid.

At lenth my old man decided that Lyons wouldnt never come to Mahomet if we set it out on the same lines all winter so we backed up and turned around and retraced 4 miles of shell holes and finley reached our objective by way of Detour.

Puling up in front of a garage my father beckoned to a dirty mechanic.

How do we get to Syracuse from here arsked my father blushing furiously.

Go strate south to Geneva and then east to Syracuse replid the dirty mechanic with a loud cough.

Isnt there no short cut arsked my father.

Go strate south to Geneva and then east to Syracuse replid the dirty mechanic.

You see daddy we go to Geneva after all I said brokenly but luckily for my piece of mind my father dont beleive in corporeal punishment a specially in front of Lyons peaple.

Soon we was on a fine road and nothing more hapened till we puled into Syracuse at 7 that evening and as for the conversation that changed hands in the car between Lyons and Syracuse you could stick it in a day message and send it for 30 cents.

Soon we was on Genesee st in Syracuse but soon turned off a blk or 2 and puled up in front of a hotel that I cant ether spell or pronounce besides witch they must of been a convention of cheese sculpters or something stoping there and any way it took the old man a hour to weedle a parler bed room and bath out of the clerk and put up a cot for me.

Wilst we was enjoying a late and futile supper in the hotel dining room a man named Duffy reconized my father and came to our table and arsked him to go to some boxing matchs in Syracuse that night.

Thanks very much said my father with a slite sneeze but you see what I have got on my hands besides witch I have been driving all day and half to start out again erly in the morning so I guess not.

Between you and I dear reader my old man has been oposed to pupilisms since the 4 of July holycost.

Who is that man arsked my mother when that man had gone away.

Mr. Duffy replid my father shove the ketchup over this way.

Yes I know he is Mr. Duffy but where did you meet him insisted my mother quaintly.

In Boston my father replid where would a person meet a man named Duffy.

When we got up the next morning it was 6 oclock and purring rain but we eat a costlv brekfus and my father said we would save time if we would all walk down to the garage where he had horded the car witch he stated was only 2 short blks away from the hotel. Well if it was only 2 short blks why people that lives next door to each other in Syracuse are by no means neighbors and when we got there the entire party was soping wet and rather rabid.

We will all catch our death of cold chuckled mv mother.

What of it explained my old man with a dirty look at the sky.

Maybe we would better put up the curtains sugested my mother smirking.

Maybe we wouldnt too said my father cordially.

Well maybe it will clear up said my mother convulsively.

Maybe it wont too replid my father as he capered into the drivers seat.

My father is charming company whilst driving on strange roads through a purring rain and even when we past through Oneida and he pronounced it like it was a biscuit neither myself or my mother ventured to correct him but finally we reached Utica when we got to witch we pulled up along side the kerb and got out and rang ourselves out to a small extent when suddenly a closed car soared past us on the left.

Why that was Mrs. Heywood in that car explained my mother with a fierce gesture. By this time it was not raining and we got back into the car and presently overtook the closed car which stopped when they recognized us.

And which boy is this quired Mrs. Heywood when the usual compliments had been changed.

This is the third he is named for his father replied my mother forcing a smile.

He has his eyes was the comment.

Bill don't you remember Mrs. Heywood said my mother turning on me she used to live in Riverside and Dr. Heywood tended to you that time you had that slight attack of obesity.

Well yes I replied with a slight accent but did not add how rotten the medicine tasted that time and soon we were on Genesee street on our way out of Utica.

I wonder why they don't name some of their streets Genesee in these eastern towns said my father for the sun was now shining but no sooner had we reached Herkimer when the clouds burst with renewed vigour and I think my old man was about to say we will stop here and have lunch when my mother suggested it herself.

No replied my father with a coarse gesture we will go on to Little Falls.

It was raining cats and dogs when we arrived at Little Falls and my father dropped a quaint remark.

If Falls is a verb he said the man that baptized this town was a practical joker.

We will halt to change our clothes replied my mother stepping into a mud puddle in front of the hotel with an informal look.

When we had done so we partook of a meagre lunch and as it was now only drooling resumed our journey.

They soked me 5 for that room said my father but what is a extra sokeing or 2 on a day like this.

I didnt mean for you to get a room said my mother violently.

Where did you want us to change our close on the register said my old man turning pail.

Wasnt it funny that we should happen to see Mrs. Heywood in Utica said my mother at lenth.

They live there dont they my father replid. Why yes my mother replid.

Well then my father replid the real joke would of been if we had of happened to see her in Auburn.

A little wile latter we past a grate many signs reading dine at the Big Nose Mountain Inn.

Rollie Zeider never told me they had named a mountain after him crid my father and soon we past through Fonda.

Soon we past through Amsterdam and I guess I must of dosed off at lease I cant remember anything between there and Schenectady and I must apologize to my readers for my laps as I am unable to ether describe the scenery or report anything that may of been said between these 2 points but I recall that as we entered Albany a remark was adrest to me for the first time since lunch.

Bill said my mother with a ½ smirk this is Albany the capital of New York state.

So this is Albany I thorght to myself.

Who is governer of New York now arsked my mother to my father.

Smith replid my father who seams to know everything.

Queer name said my mother sulkily.

Soon we puled up along side a policeman who my father arsked how do we get acrost the river to the New York road and if Albany pays their policemen by the word Ill say we were in the presents of a rich man and by the time he got through it was dark and still drooling and my old man didnt know the road and under those conditions I will not repete the conversation that transpired between Albany and Hudson but will end my chapter at the city limits of the last named settlemunt.

We were turing gaily down the main st of Hudson when a man

of 12 years capered out from the side walk and hoped on the running board.

Do you want a good garage he asked with a dirty look.

Why yes my good man replied my father tenderly but first where is the best hotel.

I will take you there said the man.

I must be a grate favorite in Hudson my father whispered at my mother.

Soon following the mans directions we pulled up in front of a hotel but when my father went at the register the clerk said I am full tonight.

Where do you get it around here asked my father tenderly.

We have no rooms replied the senile clerk paying no tension to my old mans remark but there is a woman across the st that takes loggers.

Not to excess I hope replied my father but soon we went across the st and the woman agreed to hold us for the night so myself and mother went to our apartments whilst my father and the 12 year old besought the garage. When we finally got reunited and went back to the hotel for supper it was past 8 o'clock as a person could be told from the viands. Later in front of our loggings we again met the young man who had welcomed us to Hudson and called my father to a side.

There is a sailer going to spend the night here he said in a horse whispering voice has walked all the way from his home Schenectady and he has got to report on his ship in New York tomorrow afternoon and has got no money so if he dont get a free ride he will be up vs it.

He can ride with us replied my father with a hiccup if tomorrow is anything like today a sailer will not feel out of place in my costly motor.

I will tell him replied the man with a coarse gesture.

Will you call us at ½ past 5 my mother requested to our landlady as we entered our Hudson barracks.

I will if I am awake she replied using her handkerchief to some extent.

Later we wandered how anybody could help from being awake in that hot bed of moans and groans and cat calls and caterwauls

and gulish screams of all kinds and tho we had rose erly at Syracuse and had a day of retchedness we was all more than ready to get up when she wraped on our door long ere day brake.

Where is that sailer that stoped here last night quired my father as we was about to make a lordly outburst.

He wouldnt pay his bill and razed hell so I kicked him out replid the lanlady in her bear feet.

Without farther adieu my father payed his bill and we walked into the dismal st so I will end this chapter by leaveing the fare lanlady flaping in the door way in her sredded night gown.

It was raining a little so my father bad my mother and I stand in the st wilst he went to the garage and retained the costly moter. He returned ½ a hour latter with the story that the garage had been locked and he had to go to the props house and roust him out.

How did you know where he lived quired my mother barshfully.

I used the brains god gave me was my fathers posthumous reply.

Soon we rumbled into Rhinebeck and as it was now day light and the rain had siezed we puled up in front of the Beekman arms for brekfus.

It says this is the oldest hotel in America said my mother reading the programme.

The eggs tastes all right replid my father with a corse jesture.

What is the next town quired my mother when we again set sale.

Pokippsie was my fathers reply.

Thats where Vassar is said my mother as my old man stifled a yawn I wonder if there is a store there that would have a koop for David.

I doubt if they ever heard of him said my father dryly how much do they cost.

Well I dont know.

We entered Pokippsie at lenth and turned to the left up the main st and puled up in front of a big store where myself and mother went in and purchased a koop for my little brother and a kap for me witch only took a ½ hour dureing witch my father lost his temper and when we finley immersed he was barking like a

dog and giveing the Vassar yell. 2 men come out of the store with us and tost the koop with the rest of the junk in the back seat and away we went.

Doesnt this look cute on him said my mother in regards to my new kap.

What of it replid my father with a grimace and with that we puled into Garrison.

Isnt this right acrost the river from West Point said my mother with a gasily look.

What of it replid my father tenderly and soon we found ourselves in Peckskill.

This is where that young girl cousin of mine gos to school said my father from Philadelphia.

What of it said my mother with a loud cough and presently we stoped and bought 15 gals of gas.

I have got a fund of usefull information about every town we come to said my father admireingly for instants this is Harmon where they take off the steem engines and put on the electric bullgines.

My mother looked at him with ill consealed admiration.

And what do you know about this town she arsked as we frisked into Ossining.

Why this is Ossining where they take off the hair and put on the stripes replid my father qick as a flarsh and the next place is Tarrytown where John D. Rockefeller has a estate.

What is the name of the estate quired my mother breathlessly.

Socony I supose was the sires reply.

With that we honked into Yonkers and up the funny looking main st.

What a funny looking st said my mother and I always thorght it was the home of well to do people.

Well yes replid my father it is the home of the ruling class at lease Bill Klem the umpire and Bill Langford the referee lives here.

I will end my chapter on that one.

Isn't it about time said my mother as we past Spuyten Duyvil and entered the Bureau of Manhattan that we made our plans.

What plans said my father all my plans is all ready made.



Well then you might make me your confident suggested my mother with a quaint smirk.

Well then heres the dope uttered my father in a vage tone I am going to drop you at the 125 st station where you will only half to wait 2 hours and a ½ for the rest of the family as the train from the west is do at 350 at 125 st in the meen wile I will drive out to Grenitch with Bill and see if the house is ready and etc and if the other peaples train is on time you can catch the 4 4 and I an Bill will meet you at the Grenitch station.

If you have time get a qt of milk for David said my mother with a pail look.

What kind of milk arsked my dad.

Oh sour milk my mother screened.

As she was now in a pretty bad temper we will leave her to cool off for 2 hours and a ½ in the 125 st station and end this chapter.

The lease said about my and my fathers trip from the Bureau of Manhattan to our new home the soonest mended. In some way ether I or he got balled up on the grand concorpse and next thing you know we was thretning to swoop down on Pittsfield.

Are you lost daddy I arsked tenderly.

Shut up he explained.

At length we doubled on our tracks and done much better as we finley hit New Rochelle and puled up along side a policeman with falling archs.

What road do I take for Grenitch Conn quired my father with popping eyes.

Take the Boston post replid the policeman.

I have all ready subscribed to one out of town paper said my father and staped on the gas so we will leave the flat foot gaping after us like a prune fed calf and end this chapter.

True to our promise we were at the station in Grenitch when the costly train puled in from 125 st. Myself and father hoped out of the lordly moter and helped the bulk of the famly off of the train and I aloud our nurse and my 3 brothers to kiss me tho Davids left me rarther moist.

Did you have a hard trip my father arsked to our nurse shyly.

Why no she replid with a slite stager.

She did too said my mother they all acted like little devils.

Did you get Davids milk she said turning on my father.

Why no does he like milk my father replid with a gastly smirk.

We got lost mudder I said brokenly.

We did not screened my father and accidently cracked me in the shins with a stray foot.

To change the subjeck I turned my tensions on my brother Jimmie who is nerest my age.

Ive seen our house Jimmie I said brokenly I got here first.

Yes but I slept all night on a train and you didnt replied Jimmie with a dirty look.

Nether did you said my brother John to Jimmie you was awake all night.

Were awake said my mother.

Me and David was awake all night and crid said my brother John.

But I only crid once the whole time said my brother Jimmie.

But I didnt cry at all did I I arsked to my mother.

So she replid with a loud cough Bill was a very very good boy.

So now we will say fare well to the characters in this book.

THE END

# ON A DAY LIKE THIS

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BEN HECHT

BORN: New York City, February 28, 1893.

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ON A DAY like this, he says, on a day like this, when the wind plays a cello music across the rooftops. . . . I think about things. The town is like a fireless, dimly lighted room. Yesterday the windows sparkled with sunlight. To-day they stare like little coffin tops.

On a day like this, he says, on this sort of a day I walk along smoking a pipe and wonder what I was excited about yesterday. Then I remember, he says, that once it rained yesterday and I waited under the awning till it ended. I remember, he says, that once I walked swiftly down this street toward a building on the corner. It was vastly important that I reach this building. I remember, he says, that there were days I hurried down Clark Street and days I ran down Monroe Street. Now it is windy again. There is long silence over the noises of the street. The sky looks empty and old.

There were people gathered around an automobile that had bumped into the curbing. I stopped to watch them, he says. There was a man next to me with a heavy gray face, with loose lips and with intent eyes. There was another man and another—dozens of men—all of them people who had been hurrying in the street to get somewhere. And here they were standing and looking intently at an automobile with a twisted wheel.

I became aware that we were all looking with a strange intensity

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All written for the *Chicago Daily News*, 1921-1922, and published in the book, *One Thousand and One Afternoons in Chicago*, 1922.

at this automobile; that we all stood as if waiting for something. Dozens of men hurrying somewhere suddenly stop and stand for ten, twenty, thirty minutes staring at a broken automobile. There was a reason for this. Always where there is a machine at work, digging or hammering piles, where there is a horse fallen, an auto crashed, a flapjack turner, a fountain pen demonstrator; where there is a magic clock that runs, nobody knows how, or a window puzzle that turns in a drug-store window or anything that moves behind plate glass—always where there is any one of these things there are people like us standing riveted, attentive, unwavering.

People on artificial errands, hurrying like obedient automatons through the streets; stern-faced people with dignified eyes, important-stepping people with grave decision stamped upon them; careless, innocuous-looking people—all these people look as if they had something in their heads, as if there were things of import driving them through the streets. But this is an error. Nothing in their heads. They are like the fish that swim beneath the water—a piece of shining tin captures their eyes and they pause and stare at it.

The broken automobile holds their eyes, holds them all riveted because—because it is something unordinary to look at, to think about. And there is nothing unordinary to look at or think about in their heads.

And I too, he says, on this day when the wind played cello music across the rooftops, stood in the crowd. We were all children, I noticed, more than that—infants. Open-mouthed infantile wonder staring out of our tired, gray faces. Men, without thought, men making a curious little confession in the busy street that they were not busy, that there is nothing in life at the moment that preoccupies them—that a broken automobile is a godsend, a diversion, a drama, a great happiness.

I smoked my pipe, he says, and began to wonder again. Why did they stare like this? And at what? And who were these staring ones? And what was it in them that stared? I thought of this, he says. Dead dreams, and forgotten defeats stood staring from the curb at the broken automobile. Men who had survived themselves, who had become compliant and automatic little forces in the engine of the city—these were ourselves on the curb.

And this is a weary thing to remember about the city. When I am tired, he says, and the plot of which I am hero, villain and Greek chorus suddenly vanish from my mind, I pause and look at something behind plate glass. A bauble catches my eye. Long minutes, half hours pass. There is a marvelous plentitude of baubles to look at. Machines digging, excavations, scaffoldings, advertisements, never are lacking.

And at such times I begin to notice how many of us there are. The hurry of the streets is an illusion. The noises that rise in clouds, and the too-many suits of clothes and hats that sweep by—all these things are part of an illusion. The fact drifts through my tired senses that there is an amazing silence in the street—the silence inside of people's heads. Everywhere I look I find these busy ones, these energetic ones stopped and standing like myself before a bauble in a window, before a broken automobile.

Of people, authors always make great plots. Authors always write of adventures and intrigues, of emotions and troubles and ideas which occupy people. People fall in love, people suffer defeats, people experience tragedies, happinesses, and there is no end to the action of people in books.

But here is a curious plot, he says, on a day like this. Here is a crowd around a broken automobile. The broken automobile has trapped them, betrayed them. They realize the broken automobile as a "practical" excuse to stop walking, to stop moving, to stop going anywhere or being anybody. Their serious concentration on the broken wheel enables them to pretend that they are logically interested in practical matters. Without which pretense it would be impossible for them to exist. Without which pretense they would become consciously dead. They must always seem, to themselves as well as to others, logically interested in something. Yes, always something

But the plot is—and do not misunderstand this, he cautions—that the pretense here around the broken automobile grows shallow enough to plumb. There is nothing here. Two dozen men standing dead on a curbing, tricked into confessional by a little accident.

So I will begin a book tomorrow, he says, and empties his pipe as he talks, which will have to do with the make-believe of people

in streets—the make-believe of being alive and being somebody and going somewhere.

And saying this, this garrulous one walks off with a high whistle on his lips and a grave triumph sitting on his shoulders.

# TEN-CENT WEDDING RINGS

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BEN HECHT

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A GLOOMY DAY AND the loop streets grimace behind a mist. The electric signs are lighted. The buildings open like great fans in the half dark.

The streets invite a mood of melodrama. Windows glint evilly. Doorways grin with rows of electric teeth. This, *donnerwetter!* is the Great City of the old-time ten-twenty-thirty thrillers. The devourer of innocence, the strumpet of stone.

I walk along humming a bar of villainous music, the "skeeter scale" that the orchestra used to tum tum tum taaaa-tum in the old Alhambra as the two dock wallopers and the leering Chinaman were climbing in through little Mabel's hall bedroom window to abduct her.

Those were happy days for the drama, when a scoundrel was a scoundrel and wore a silk hat to prove it, and a hero was a two-fisted man, as anybody could tell by a glance at his marcelled hair and his open-at-the-throat shirt.

Tum tum tum tum taaa-tum. Pizzicato pianissimo, says the direction on the score. So we are all set for a melodrama. Here is the Great City back-drop. Here are the grim-faced crowds shuffling by under the jaundice glare of electric signs. And Christmas is coming. A vague gray snow trickles out of the gloom.

A proper time for melodrama. All we need is a plot. Come, come now—a plot alive with villains and weeping maidens. Halto! The window of the 5- and 10-cent store! a tumble of gewgaws and candies and kitchen utensils. Christmas tree tinsel and salted peanuts, jazz music and mittens.

The curtain is up. Egad, what a masterly scene. A kitchen Coney Island. A puzzle picture of isles, signs, smells, noises.

Cinderella wandering wistfully in the glass-bead section looking for a fairy godmother.

A clinking obbligato by the cash registers. The poor are buying gifts. This garish froth of merchandise is the background of their luxuries. This noisy puzzle-picture store is their horn of plenty. A sad thought and we'll dismiss it. What we want is plot.

Perhaps the jazz-song booster singing out of the side of his mouth with tired eyes leering at the crowd of girls: "Won't You Let Me Love You If I Promise to Be Good?" And "Love Me, Turtle Dove." And "Lovin' Looie." And "The Lovin' Blues."

All lovin'. Jazz songs, ballads, sad, silly, boobish nut songs—all about love me—love me. All about stars and kisses, moonlight and "she took my man away." There are telephones all over the walls and the song booster's voice pops out over the salted-peanut section, over the safety-pin and brassware section. A tinny, nasal voice with a whine and a hoarseness almost hiding the words.

The cash registers clink, clink. "Are you waited on, madam? Five cents a package, madam." The crowds, tired-eyed, shabbily dressed, bundle-laden, young, old—the crowds shuffle up and down, staring at gewgaws, and the love-me love songs follow them around. Follow them to the loose-bead counter where Madge with her Japanese puffs of hair, her wad of gum and her black shirtwaist that she keeps straightening out continually by drawing up her bosom and pressing down on her hips with her hands—where Madge holds forth.

Tum tum tum tum taaa-tum—halto! Here is our plot. Outside the pizzicato of the crowds, the Great City, shining, dragon-eyed, through the mist—the City That Has No Heart. And here under our nose, twinkling up at our eyes, a huge tray full of 10-cent wedding rings. End of Act One.

Act Two, now—Madge, the sharp-tongued, weary-eyed young woman behind the counter. Love-me love songs in her ear and people unraveling, faces unraveling before her. Who buys these wedding rings, Madge? And did you ever notice anything odd about your customers? And why do you suppose they buy ten-cent wedding rings, Madge?

"Just a moment," says Madge. "What is it, miss? A ring? What kind? Oh, yes. Ten cents. Gold or platinum just the same. Yes."



Two giggling girls move off. And Madge, chewing gently on her wad of gum and smoothing her huge hair puffs out with the coyly stiffened palms of her hands, talks.

"Sure, I get you. About the wedding rings. Sure, that's easy. We sell about twenty or thirty of them every day. Oh, mostly to kids—girls and boys. Sometimes an old Johnny comes in with a moth-eaten fur collar and blows a dime for a wedding ring. But mostly girls.

"I sometimes take a second look at them. They usually giggle when they ask for the ring. And they usually pretend it's for somebody as a joke they're buying it. Or sometimes they walk around the counter for a half hour and get me nervous as a cat. 'Cause I know what they want and they can't get their gall up to come and ask for it. But finally they make the break and come up and pick out a ring, without saying a word and hand over ten cents.

"There was one girl no more than sixteen just this morning. She come here all full of pep and kidded about things and said wasn't them platinum wedding rings just too grand for words, and so on. Then she said she wanted a half-dozen of them, and was there a discount when bought in such quantity? I started wrapping them up when I looked at her and she was crying. And she dropped her sixty cents on the counter and said: 'Never mind, never mind. I don't want them. I can't wear them. They'll only make it worse.'"

A middle-aged-looking man interrupts. "What is it, sir?" asks Madge. "Anything in rings? What kind?" "Oh, just plain rings," says the man with a great show of indifference, while his eyes ferret among the trinkets on the counter. And then, very calmly: "Oh, these will do, I guess." Two wedding rings, and he spent twenty cents. Madge follows him with her eyes. "That's it," she whispers, "usually the men buy two. One for themselves and one for the girl. Or if it's the girl that's buying them it's one for herself and one for her girl chum who's going with her and the two fellas on the party. Say, take it from me, these rings don't ever hear no wedding marches."

Back into the gloomy street again. A plot in our head, but who's the villain and who's the heroine and the hero? An easy answer to that. The crowd here—sad-faced, tired-walking, bundle-laden.

The crowd continually dissolving amid street cars and autos is the villain.

A crowd of shoppers buying slippers for uncle and shawls for mother and mufflers for brother and some bars of soap for the bathroom. Buying everything and anything that fill the fan-shaped buildings with their glinting windows. Buying carpet sweepers and window curtains and linoleum.

Pizzicato, pianissimo, professor—little-girl gigglers and hard-faced dock wallopers and slick-haired lounge lizards and broken-hearted ones—twenty a day they sidle up to Madge's counter, where the love me, love me songs razz the heavy air, and shoot a dime for a wedding ring.

## TO BERT WILLIAMS

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BEN HECHT

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“WELL,” SAID Mr. Bert Williams, in his best “Under the Bamboo Tree” dialect, “If you like mah singin’ and actin’ so much, how come, you bein’ a writer, you don’t write somethin’ about youah convictions on this subjeck? Oh! It’s not youah depahtment! Hm! Tha’s jes’ mah luck. I was always the mos’ unluckiest puhson who ever trifled with misfohtune. Not his depahtment! Tha’—that’s jes’ it. I never seems to fall jes’ exactly in the ri-right depahtment.

“May I ask, without meanin’ to be puhsonal, jes’ what is your depahtment? Murder! Oh, you is the one who writes about murders and murderuhs foh the paper! Nothin’ else? Is tha’ so? Jes’ murders and murderuhs and—and things like tha’? Well, tha’ jes’ shows how deceivin’ looks is, fo’ when you came in heah I says to mahself, I says, ‘this gen’leman is a critic of the drama.’ And when I sees you have on a pair o’ gloves I added quickly to mahself, ‘Yes, suh, chances are he is not only a critic of the drama, but likewise even possuhbly a musical critic.’ Yes, suh, all mah life I have had the desire to be interviewed by a musical critic, but no matter how hard I sing or how frequently, no musical critic has yet taken cognizance o’ me. No, suh, I get no cognizance whatsoever.

“Not meanin’ to disparage you, suh, or your valuable depahtment. Foh if you is in charge o’ the murder and murderuh’s depahtment o’ yo’ paper possuhbly some time you may refer to me lightly between stabbin’s or shootin’s in such wise as to say, foh instance, ‘the doomed man was listenin’ to Mr. Williams’ latest song on the phonograph when he received the bullet wound. Death was instantaneous, the doomed man dyin’ with a smile on his lips. Mr. Williams’ singin’ makes death easy—an’ desirable.’

“What, suh? You is! Sam, fetch the gen'lman some o' the fire-water, the non-company brand, Sam. All right, say when. Aw, shucks, that ain't enough to wet a cat's whiskers. Say when again. There, tha's better. Here, Sam. You got to help drink this. It's important. The gen'lman says if I will wait a little while, jes'a little while, he is goin' to alter his depahtment on the newspaper. Wasn't that it? Oh, I see. In the magazine. Very well. Here's to waht you says about me some day in the magazine. An' when you writes it don't forget to mention somewhere along in it how when I was playin' in San Francisco and Sarah Bernhardt was playin' there, and this was years ago, don' forget to mention along with what you write about mah singin' and actin' that I come to mah dressing room one evenin', in Frisco, and there's the hugest box o' flowers you ever saw with mah name on it. An' I open it up and, boy! There plain as the nose on your face is a card among the flowers readin' 'to a fellow artist, from Sarah Bernhardt.' And—whilst we are, so to speak, on the subjeck—you can put in likewise what Eleanora Duse said o' me. You know who she is, I suppose, the very most superlative genius o' the stage, suh. Yes, suh, the very most. An' she says o' me when she went back to Italy, how I was the best artist on the American stage.

“Artist! Tha' always makes Sam laugh, don't it, Sam, when he heahs me refuhsed to as artist. An'—have another beaker o' fire-water, suh. It's strictly non-company brand. An' here's how again to tha' day you speak of when you write this article about me. An', boy, make it soon, 'cause this life, this sinful theat'ical life, is killin' me fast. But I'll try an' wait. Here's howdy.”

He didn't wait. And today a lazy, crooked grin and a dolorous-eyed black face drift among the shades in the Valhalla where the Great Actors sit reading their press notices to one another. The Great Actors who have died since the day of Euripides—they sit around in their favorite make-ups in the Valhalla reserved for all good and glorious Thespians.

A company of ladies and gentlemen that would make Mr. Belasco's heart stop beating! The Booths and Barretts from antiquity down, the Mrs. Siddonses and Pattis, the Cyranos, Hamlets, buffoons and heroes. All of them in their favorite make-ups, in their favorite cap and bells, their favorite swords, their favorite

doublet and hose—all of them sit around in the special Valhalla of the Great Actors reading their press notices to one another and listening to the hosannas of such critics as have managed to pry into the anterior heaven.

And today Bert Williams makes his entrance. Yes, suh, it took that long to find just the right make-up. To get just the right kind of ill-fitting white gloves and floppy shoes and nondescript pants. But it's an important entrance. The lazy crooked grin is a bit nervous. The dolorous eyes peer sadly through the opening door of this new theater.

Lawdy, man, this is got a Broadway first night backed off the boards. Rejane, Caruso, Coquelin, Garrick and a thousand others sittin' against the towering walls, sittin' with their eyes on the huge door within to see who's a-comin' in now.

All right, professor, jes' a little music. Nothin' much. Anything kind o' sad and fidgetylike. Tha's it, that-a-boy. There's no use worryin'—much. 'Member what Duse said as I was the greatest artist, an' 'member how Sarah Bernhardt sent me roses in Frisco an' says, 'To a fellow artist'? Yes, suh, they can't do mo' than walk out on me. An' ah's been walked out on befo'.

All right, professor. Tha's it. Now I'll stick my hand inside the door and wiggle mah fingers kind o' slow like. Jes' like that. An' I'll come on slow. Nothin' to worry about—much.

A wrinkled white-gloved hand moving slowly inside the door of the Valhalla. Sad, fidgety music. Silence in the great hall. This is another one coming on—another entrance. A lazy, crooked grin and a dolorous-eyed black face. Floppy shoes and weebegone pants.

Bravo, Mr. Williams! The great hall rings with hand-clapping. The great hall begins to fill with chuckles. There it is—the same curious grin, the lugubrious apology of a grin, the weary pessimistic child of a grin.

The Great Actors, eager-eyed and silent, sit back on their thrones. The door of the Valhalla of Great Actors swings slowly shut. No Flo Ziegfeld lighting this time, but a great shoot of sunshine for a "garden". And the music different, easier to sing to, somehow. Music of harps and flutes. And a deep voice rises.

Yes, I would have liked to have been there in the Valhalla of

the Great Actors, when Bert Williams came shuffling through the towering doors and stood singing his entrance song to the silent, eager-eyed throng of Rejanes, Barretts and Coquelins—

Ah ain't ever done nothin' to nobody,

Ah ain't ever got nothin' from nobody—no time, nohow.

Ah ain't ever goin' t'do nothin' for nobody—

Till somebody—

# PERMUTATIONS AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES

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ALDOUS HUXLEY

BORN: Godalming, Surrey, July 26, 1894.

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## A PLAY

It is night on the terrace outside the Hotel Cimarosa. Part of the garden facade of the hotel is seen at the back of the stage—a bare white wall, with three French windows giving on to balconies about ten feet from the ground, and below them, leading from the terrace to the lounge, a double door of glass, open now, through which a yellow radiance streams out into the night. On the paved terrace stand two or three green iron tables and chairs. To the left a mass of dark foliage, ilex and cypress, in the shadow of which more tables and chairs are set. At the back to the left a strip of sky is visible between the corner of the hotel and the dark trees, blue and starry, for it is a marvellous June evening. Behind the trees the ground slopes steeply down and down to an old city in the valley below, of whose invisible presence you are made aware by the sound of many bells wafted up from a score of slender towers in a sweet and melancholy discord that seems to mourn the passing of each successive hour. When the curtain rises the terrace is almost deserted; the hotel dinner is not yet over. A single guest, COUNT ALBERTO TIRETTA, is discovered, sitting in a position of histrionic despair at one of the little green tables. A waiter stands respectfully sympathetic at his side. ALBERTO is a little man with large lustrous eyes and a black moustache, about twenty-five years

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*Permutations Among the Nightingales*, published in the volume, *Mortal Coils*, George H. Doran, 1922.

of age. He has the pathetic charm of an Italian street-boy with an organ—almost as pretty and sentimental as Murillo's little beggars.

ALBERTO (*making a florid gesture with his right hand and with his left covering his eyes*). Whereupon, Waiter (*he is reciting a tale of woes*), she slammed the door in my face. (*He brings down his gesticulating right hand with a crash on to the table.*)

WAITER. In your face, Signore? Impossible!

ALBERTO. Impossible, but a fact. Some more brandy, please; I am a little weary. (*The waiter uncorks the bottle he has been holding under his arm and fills Alberto's glass.*)

WAITER. That will be one lira twenty-five, Signore.

ALBERTO (*throwing down a note*). Keep the change.

WAITER (*bowing*). Thank you, Signore. But if I were the Signore I should beat her. (*He holds up the Cognac bottle and by way of illustration slaps its black polished flanks.*)

ALBERTO. Beat her? But I tell you I am in love with her.

WAITER. All the more reason, then, Signore. It will be not only a stern disciplinary duty, but a pleasure as well; oh, I assure you, Signore, a pleasure.

ALBERTO. Enough, enough. You sully the melancholy beauty of my thoughts. My feelings at this moment are of an unheard-of delicacy and purity. Respect them, I beg you. Some more brandy, please.

WAITER (*pouring out the brandy*). Delicacy, purity. . . . Ah, believe me, Signore . . . That will be one lira twenty-five.

ALBERTO (*throwing down another note with the same superbly aristocratic gesture*). Keep the change.

WAITER. Thank you, Signore. But as I was saying, Signore: delicacy, purity. . . . You think I do not understand such sentiments. Alas, Signore, beneath the humblest shirt-front there beats a heart. And if the Signore's sentiments are too much for him, I have a niece. Eighteen years old, and what eyes, what forms!

ALBERTO. Stop, stop. Respect my feelings, Waiter, as well as the ears of the young lady (*he points towards the glass doors*). Remember she is an American. (*The Waiter bows and goes into the hotel.*)



SIDNEY DOLPHIN and MISS AMY TOOMIS come out together on to the terrace. MISS AMY supports a well-shaped head on one of the most graceful necks that ever issued from Minneapolis. The eyes are dark, limpid, ingenuous; the mouth expresses sensibility. She is twenty-two and the heiress of those ill-gotten Toomis millions. SIDNEY DOLPHIN has a romantic aristocratic appearance. The tailoring of 1830 would suit him. Balzac would have described his face as *plein de poesie*. In effect he does happen to be a poet. His two volumes of verse, "Zeotrope" and "Trembling Ears," have been recognised by intelligent critics as remarkable. How far they are poetry nobody, least of all Dolphin himself, is certain. They may be merely the ingenious products of a very cultured and elaborate brain. Mere curiosities; who knows? His age is twenty-seven.

They sit down at one of the little iron tables. ALBERTO they do not see; the shadow of the trees conceals him. For his part, he is too much absorbed in savouring his own despair to pay any attention to the newcomers. There is a long, uncomfortable silence. DOLPHIN assumes the Thinker's mask—the bent brow, the frown, the finger to the forehead. AMY regards this romantic gargoyle with some astonishment. Pleased with her interest in him, DOLPHIN racks his brains to think of some way of exploiting this curiosity to his own advantage; but he is too shy to play any of the gambits which his ingenuity suggests. AMY makes a social effort and speaks, in chanting Middle Western tones.

AMY. It's been a wonderful day, hasn't it?

DOLPHIN (starting, as though roused from profoundest thought). Yes, yes, it has.

AMY. You don't often get it as fine as this in England, I guess.

DOLPHIN. Not often.

AMY. Nor do we over at home.

DOLPHIN. So I should suppose. (Silence. A spasm of anguish crosses DOLPHIN's face; then he reassumes the old Thinker's mask. AMY looks at him for a little longer, then, unable to suppress her growing curiosity, she says with a sudden burst of childish confidence):

AMY. It must be wonderful to be able to think as hard as you do, Mr. Dolphin. Or are you sad about something?

DOLPHIN (*looks up, smiles, and blushes; a spell has been broken*). The finger at the temple, Miss Toomis, is not the barrel of a revolver.

AMY. That means you're not specially sad about anything. Just thinking.

DOLPHIN. Just thinking.

AMY. What about?

DOLPHIN. Oh, just life, you know—life and letters.

AMY. Letters? Do you mean love letters.

DOLPHIN. No, no. Letters in the sense of literature; letters as opposed to life.

AMY (*disappointed*). Oh, literature. They used to teach us literature at school. But I could never understand Emerson. What do you think about literature for?

DOLPHIN. It interests me, you know. I read it; I even try to write it.

AMY (*very much excited*). What, are you a writer, a poet, Mr. Dolphin?

DOLPHIN. Alas, it is only too true; I am.

AMY. But what do you write?

DOLPHIN. Verse and prose, Miss Toomis. Just verse and pros

AMY (*with enthusiasm*). Isn't that interesting! I've never met a poet before, you know.

DOLPHIN. Fortunate being. Why, before I left England I attended a luncheon of the Poetry Union at which no less than a hundred and eighty-nine poets were present. The sight of them made me decide to go to Italy.

AMY. Will you show me your books?

DOLPHIN. Certainly not, Miss Toomis. That would ruin our friendship. I am insufferable in my writings. In them I give vent to all the horrible thoughts and impulses which I am too timid to express or put into practice in real life. Take me as you find me here, a decent specimen of a man, shy but able to talk intelligently when the layers of ice are broken, aimless, ineffective, but on the whole quite a good sort.

AMY. But I know that man already, Mr. Dolphin. I want to know the poet. Tell me what the poet is like.

DOLPHIN. He is older, Miss Toomis, than the rocks on which he sits. He is villainous. He is . . . but there, I really must stop. It was you who set me going, though. Did you do it on purpose?

AMY. Do what on purpose?

DOLPHIN. Make me talk about myself. If you want to get people to like you, you must always lead the conversation on to the subject of their characters. Nothing pleases them so much. They'll talk with enthusiasm for hours and go away saying that you're the most charming, cleverest person they've ever met. But of course you knew that already. You're Machiavellian.

AMY. Machiavellian? You're the first person that's ever said that. I always thought I was very simple and straightforward. People say about me that . . . Ah, now I'm talking about myself. That was unscrupulous of you. But you shouldn't have told me about the trick if you wanted it to succeed.

DOLPHIN. Yes. It was silly of me. If I hadn't, you'd have gone on talking about yourself and thought me the nicest man in the world.

AMY. I want to hear about your poetry. Are you writing any now?

DOLPHIN. I have composed the first line of a magnificent epic. But I can't get any further.

AMY. How does it go?

DOLPHIN. Like this (*he clears his throat*). "Casbeen has been, and Moghreb is no more." Ah, the transience of all sublunary things! But inspiration has stopped short there.

AMY. What exactly does it mean?

DOLPHIN. Ah, there you're asking too much, Miss Toomis. Waiter, some coffee for two.

WAITER (*who is standing in the door of the lounge*). Si, Signore. Will the lady and gentleman take it here, or in the gardens, perhaps?

DOLPHIN. A good suggestion. Why shouldn't the lady and gentleman take it in the garden?

AMY. Why not?

DOLPHIN. By the fountain, then, Waiter. We can talk about ourselves there to the tune of falling waters.

AMY. And you shall recite your poetry, Mr. Dolphin. I just love poetry. Do you know Mrs. Wilcox's *Poems of Passion*? (They go out to the left. A nightingale utters two or three phrases of song and from far down the bells of the city jangle the three-quarters and die slowly away into the silence out of which they rose and came together.)

(LUCREZIA GRATTAROL has come out of the hotel just in time to overhear Miss Toomis's last remark, just in time to see her walk slowly away with a hand on SIDNEY DOLPHIN's arm. LUCREZIA has a fine thoroughbred appearance, an aquiline nose, a finely curved sensual mouth, a superb white brow, a quivering nostril. She is the last of a family whose name is as illustrious in Venetian annals as that of Foscari, Tiepolo, or Tron. She stamps a preposterously high-heeled foot and tosses her head.)

LUCREZIA. Passion! Passion, indeed! An American! (She starts to run after the retreating couple, when ALBERTO, who has been sitting with his head between his hands, looks up and catches sight of the newcomer.)

ALBERTO. Lucrezia!

LUCREZIA (starts, for in the shade beneath the trees she had not seen him.) Oh! You gave me such a fright, Alberto. I'm in a hurry now. Later on, if you . . .

ALBERTO (in a desperate voice that breaks into a sob). Lucrezia! You must come and talk to me. You must.

LUCREZIA. But I tell you I can't now, Alberto. Later on.

ALBERTO (the tears streaming down his cheeks). Now, now, now! You must come now. I am lost if you don't.

LUCREZIA (looking indecisively first at ALBERTO and then along the path down which AMY and SIDNEY DOLPHIN have disappeared). But supposing I am lost if I do come?

ALBERTO. But you couldn't be as much lost as I am. Ah, you don't know what it is to suffer. Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt weiss was ich leide. Oh, Lucrezia . . . (He sobs unrestrainedly.)

LUCREZIA (goes over to where ALBERTO is sitting. She pats his shoulder and his bowed head of black curly hair). There, there, my little Bertino. Tell me what it is. You mustn't cry. There, there.

ALBERTO (drying his eyes and rubbing his head, like a cat, avid

of caresses, against her hand). How can I thank you enough, Lucrezia? You are like a mother to me.

LUCREZIA. I know. That's just what's so dangerous.

ALBERTO (*lets his head fall upon her bosom*). I come to you for comfort, like a tired child, Lucrezia.

LUCREZIA. Poor darling! (*She strokes his hair, twines its thick black tendrils round her fingers. ALBERTO is abjectly pathetic.*)

ALBERTO (*with closed eyes and a seraphic smile*). Ah, the suavity, the beauty of this maternal instinct!

LUCREZIA (*with a sudden access of energy and passion*). The disgustingness of it, you mean. (*She pushes him from her. His head wobbles once, as though it were inanimate, before he straightens into life*). The maternal instinct. Ugh! It's been the undoing of too many women. You men come with your sentimental babyishness and exploit it for your own lusts. Be a man, Bertino. Be a woman, I mean, if you can.

ALBERTO (*looking up at her with eyes full of doglike, dumb reproach*). Lucrezia! You, too? Is there nobody who cares for me? This is the unkindest cut of all. I may as well die. (*He relapses into tears.*)

LUCREZIA (*who has started to go, turns back, irresolute*). Now, don't cry, Bertino. Can't you behave like a reasonable being? (*She makes as though to go again.*)

ALBERTO (*through his sobs*). You too, Lucrezia! Oh, I can't bear it, I can't bear it.

LUCREZIA (*turning back desperately*). But what do you want me to do? Why should you expect me to hold your hand?

ALBERTO. I thought better of you, Lucrezia. Let me go. There is nothing left for me now but death. (*He rises to his feet, takes a step or two, and then collapses into another chair, unable to move.*)

LUCREZIA (*torn between anger and remorse*). Now do behave yourself sensibly, Bertino. There, there . . . you mustn't cry. I'm sorry if I've hurt you. (*Looking towards the left along the path taken by AMY and DOLPHIN.*) Oh, damnation! (*She stamps her foot.*) Here, Bertino, do pull yourself together. (*She raises him up.*) There, now you must stop crying. (*But as soon as she lets go of him his head falls back on to the iron table with an un-*

pleasant, meaty bump. That bump is too much for LUCREZIA. She bends over him, strokes his head, even kisses the lustrous curls.) Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I have been a beast. But, tell me first, what's the matter, Bertino? What is it, my poor darling? Tell me.

ALBERTO. Nobody loves me.

LUCREZIA. But we're all devoted to you, Bertino mio.

ALBERTO. She isn't. To-day she shut the door in my face.

LUCREZIA. She? You mean the Frenchwoman, the one you told me about? Louise, wasn't she?

ALBERTO. Yes, the one with the golden hair.

LUCREZIA. And the white legs. I remember: you saw her bathing.

ALBERTO (*lays his hand on his heart*). Ah, don't remind me of it. (*His face twitches convulsively.*)

LUCREZIA. And now she's gone and shut the door in your face.

ALBERTO. In my face, Lucrezia.

LUCREZIA. Poor darling!

ALBERTO. For me there is nothing now but the outer darkness.

LUCREZIA. Is the door shut forever, then?

ALBERTO. Definitely, for ever.

LUCREZIA. But have you tried knocking? Perhaps, after all, it might be opened again, if only a crack.

ALBERTO. What, bruise my hands against the granite of her heart?

LUCREZIA. Don't be too poetical, Bertino mio. Why not try again, in any case?

ALBERTO. You give me courage.

LUCREZIA. There's no harm in trying, you know.

ALBERTO. Courage to live, to conquer. (*He beats his breast.*) I am a man again, thanks to you, Lucrezia, my inspirer, my Muse, my Egeria. How can I be sufficiently grateful. (*He kisses her.*) I am the child of your spirit. (*He kisses her again.*)

LUCREZIA. Enough, enough. I am not ambitious to be a mother, yet awhile. Quickly now, Bertino, I know you will succeed.

ALBERTO (*cramming his hat down on his head and knocking with his walking-stick on the ground*). Succeed or die, Lucrezia. (*He goes out with a loud martial stamp.*)

LUCREZIA (*to the waiter who is passing across the stage with a*

coffee-pot and cups on tray). Have you seen the Signorina Toomis, Giuseppe?

WAITER. The Signorina is down in the garden. So is the Signore Dolphin. By the fountain, Signorina. This is the Signore's coffee.

LUCREZIA. Have you a mother, Giuseppe?

WAITER. Unfortunately, Signorina.

LUCREZIA. Unfortunately? Does she treat you badly, then?

WAITER. Like a dog, Signorina.

LUCREZIA. Ah, I should like to see your mother. I should like to ask her to give me some hints on how to bring up children.

WAITER. But surely, Signorina, you are not expecting, you—ah . . .

LUCREZIA. Only figuratively, Giuseppe. My children are spiritual children.

WAITER. Precisely, precisely! My mother, alas! is not a spiritual relation. Nor is my fiancée.

LUCREZIA. I didn't know you were engaged.

WAITER. To an angel of perdition. Believe me, Signorina, I go to my destruction in that woman—go with open eyes. There is no escape. She is what is called in the Holy Bible (*crosses himself*) a Fisher of Men.

LUCREZIA. You have remarkable connections, Giuseppe.

WAITER. I am honoured by your words, Signorina. But the coffee becomes cold. (*He hurries out to the left.*)

LUCREZIA. In the garden! By the fountain! And there's the nightingale beginning to sing in earnest! Good heavens! what may not already have happened? (*She runs out after the waiter.*)

(Two persons emerge from the hotel, the VICOMTE DE BARBAZANGE and the BARONESS KOCH DE WORMS. PAUL DE BARBAZANGE is a young man—twenty-six perhaps—of exquisite grace. Five foot ten, well built, dark hair, sleek as marble, the most refined aristocratic features, and a monocle. SIMONE DE WORMS is forty, a ripe Semitic beauty. Five years more and the bursting point of overripeness will have been reached. But now, thanks to massage, powerful corsets, skin foods, and powder, she is still a beauty—a beauty of the type Italians admire, cushioned, steatopygous. PAUL, who has a faultless taste in brac-a-brac and women, and is by instinct and up-

*bringing an ardent anti-Semite, finds her infinitely repulsive. The Baronne enters with a loud shrill giggle. She gives PAUL a slap with her green feather fan.)*

SIMONE. Oh, you naughty boy! *Quelle histoire!* Mon Dieu! How dare you tell me such a story!

PAUL. For you, Baronne, I would risk anything—even your displeasure.

SIMONE. Charming boy! But stories of that kind . . . And you look so innocent, too! Do you know any more like it?

PAUL (suddenly grave). Not of that description. But I will tell you a story of another kind, a true story, a tragic story.

SIMONE. Did I ever tell you how I saw a woman run over by a train? Cut to pieces, literally, to pieces. So disagreeable. I'll tell you later. But now, what about your story?

PAUL. Oh, it's nothing, nothing.

SIMONE. But you promised to tell it me.

PAUL. It's only a commonplace anecdote. A young man, poor but noble, with a name and a position to keep up. A few youthful follies, a mountain of debts, and no way out except the revolver. This is all dull and obvious enough. But now follows the interesting part of the story. He is about to take that way out, when he meets the woman of his dreams, the goddess, the angel, the ideal. He loves, and he must die without a word. (*He turns his face away from the Baronne, as though his emotion were too much for him, which indeed it is.*)

SIMONE. Vicomte—Paul—this young man is you?

PAUL (solemnly). He is.

SIMONE. And the woman?

PAUL. Oh, I can't, I mayn't tell you.

SIMONE. The woman! Tell me, Paul.

PAUL (*turning towards her and falling on his knees*). The woman, Simone, is you. Ah, but I had no right to say it.

SIMONE (*quivering with emotion*). My Paul! (*She clasps his head to her bosom. A grimace of disgust contorts Paul's classical features. He endures Simone's caresses with a stoical patience.*) But what is this about a revolver? That is only a joke, Paul, isn't it? Say it isn't true.

PAUL. Alas, Simone, too true. (*He taps his coat pocket.*) There



it lies. To-morrow I have a hundred and seventy thousand francs to pay, or be dishonoured. I cannot pay the sum. A Barbazange does not survive dishonour. My ancestors were Crusaders, preux chevaliers to a man. Their code is mine. Dishonour for me is worse than death.

SIMONE. Mon Dieu, Paul, how noble you are! *(She lays her hands on his shoulder, leans back, and surveys him at arm's length, a look of pride and anxious happiness on her face.)*

PAUL *(dropping his eyes modestly)*. Not at all. I was born noble, and noblesse oblige, as we say in our family. Farewell, Simone, I love you—and I must die. My last thought will be of you. *(He kisses her hand, rises to his feet, and makes as though to go.)*

SIMONE *(clutching him by the arm)*. No, Paul, no. You must not, shall not, do anything rash. A hundred and seventy thousand francs, did you say? It is paltry. Is there no one who could lend or give you the money?

PAUL. Not a soul. Farewell, Simone.

SIMONE. Stay, Paul, I hardly dare to ask it of you—you with such lofty ideas of honour—but would you . . . from me?

PAUL. Take money from a woman? Ah, Simone, tempt me no more. I might do an ignoble act.

SIMONE. But from me, Paul, from me. I am not in your eyes a woman like any other woman, am I?

PAUL. It is true that my ancestors, the Crusaders, the preux chevaliers, might in all honour receive gifts from the ladies of their choice—chargers, swords, armour, or tenderer mementoes, such as gloves or garters. But money—no; who ever heard of their taking money?

SIMONE. But what would be the use of my giving you swords and horses? You could never use them. Consider, my knight, my noble Sir Paul, in these days the contests of chivalry have assumed a different form; the weapons and the armour have changed. Your sword must be of gold and paper; your breastplate of hard cash; your charger of gilt-edged securities. I offer you the shining panoply of the modern crusader. Will you accept it?

PAUL. You are eloquent, Simone. You could win over the devil himself with that angelic voice of yours. But it cannot be. Money is always money. The code is clear. I cannot accept your offer.

Here is the way out. (*He takes an automatic pistol out of his pocket.*) Thank you, Simone, and good-by. How wonderful is the love of a pure woman.

SIMONE. Paul, Paul, give that to me! (*She snatches the pistol from his hand.*) If anything were to happen to you, Paul, I should kill myself with this. You must live, you must consent to accept the money. You mustn't let your honour make a martyr of you.

PAUL (*brushing a tear from his eyes*). No, I can't. . . . Give me that pistol, I beg you.

SIMONE. For my sake, Paul.

PAUL. Oh, you make it impossible for me to act as the voices of dead ancestors tell me I should. . . . For your sake, then, Simone, I consent to live. For your sake I dare to accept the gift you offer.

SIMONE (*kissing his hand in an outburst of gratitude*). Thank you, thank you, Paul. How happy I am!

PAUL. I, too, light of my life.

SIMONE. My month's allowance arrived to-day. I have the cheque here. (*She takes it out of her corsage.*) Two hundred thousand francs. It's signed already. You can get it cashed as soon as the banks open to-morrow.

PAUL (*moved by an outburst of genuine emotion kisses indiscriminately the cheque, the Baronne, his own hands*). My angel, you have saved me. How can I thank you? How can I love you enough? Ah, mon petit bouton de rose.

SIMONE. Oh, naughty, naughty! Not now, my Paul; you must wait till some other time.

PAUL. I burn with impatience.

SIMONE. Quelle fougue! Listen, then. In an hour's time, Paul cheri, in my boudoir; I shall be alone.

PAUL. An hour? It is an eternity.

SIMONE (*playfully*). An hour. I won't relent. Till then, my Paul. (*She blows a kiss and runs out: the scenery trembles at her passage.*)

(*PAUL looks at the cheque, then pulls out a large silk handkerchief and wipes his neck inside his collar.*)

(*DOLPHIN drifts in from the left. He is smoking a cigarette, but he does not seem to be enjoying it.*)

PAUL. Alone?

DOLPHIN. Alas!

PAUL. Brooding on the universe as usual? I envy you your philosophic detachment. Personally, I find that the world is very much too much with us; and the devil too; (*he looks at the cheque in his hand*) and above all the flesh. My god, the flesh. . . . (*He wipes his neck again.*)

DOLPHIN. My philosophic detachment? But it's only a mask to hide the ineffectual longings I have to achieve contact with the world.

PAUL. But surely nothing is easier. One just makes a movement and impinges on one's fellow-beings.

DOLPHIN. Not with a temperament like mine. Imagine a shyness more powerful than curiosity or desire, a paralysis of all the faculties. You are a man of the world. You were born with forehead of brass to affront every social emergency. Ah, if you knew what a torture it is to find yourself in the presence of someone—a woman, perhaps—someone in whom you take an interest that is not merely philosophic; to find oneself in the presence of such a person and to be incapable, yes, physically incapable, of saying a word to express your interest in her or your desire to possess her intimacy. Ah, I notice I have slipped into the feminine. Inevitably, for of course the person is always a she.

PAUL. Of course, of course. That goes without saying. But what's the trouble? Women are so simple to deal with.

DOLPHIN. I know. Perfectly simple if one's in the right state of mind. I have found that out myself; for moments come—alas, how rarely!—when I am filled with a spirit of confidence, possessed by some angel or devil or power. Ah, then I feel myself to be superb. I carry all before me. In those brief moments the whole secret of the world is revealed to me. I perceive that the supreme quality in the human soul is effrontery. Genius in the man of action is simply the apotheosis of charlatanism. Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Mr. Gladstone, Lloyd George—what are they? Just ordinary human beings projected through the magic lantern of a prodigious effrontery and so magnified to a thousand times larger than life. Look at me. I am far more intelligent than any of these fabulous figures; my sensibility is more refined than theirs; I am morally

superior to any of them. And yet, by my lack of charlatanism, I am made less than nothing. My qualities are projected through the wrong end of a telescope and the world perceives me far smaller than I really am. But the world—who cares about the world? The only people who matter are the women.

PAUL. Very true, my dear Dolphin. The women. . . . (*He looks at the cheque and mops himself once more with his mauve silk handkerchief.*)

DOLPHIN. To-night was one of my moments of triumph. I felt myself suddenly free of all my inhibitions.

PAUL. I hope you profited by the auspicious occasion.

DOLPHIN. I did. I was making headway. I had—but I don't know why I should bore you with my confidences. Curious that one should be dumb before intimates and open one's mind to an all but stranger. I must apologise.

PAUL. But I am all attention and sympathy, my dear Dolphin. And I take it a little hardly that you should regard me as a stranger. (*He lays a hand on Dolphin's shoulder.*)

DOLPHIN. Thank you, Barbazange, thank you. Well, if you consent to be the receptacle of my woes, I shall go on pouring them out. . . . Miss Toomis . . . But tell me frankly what you think of her.

PAUL. Well . . .

DOLPHIN. A little too ingenuous, a little silly even, eh?

PAUL. Now you say so, she certainly isn't very intellectually stimulating.

DOLPHIN. Precisely. But . . . oh, those china-blue eyes, that ingenuousness, that pathetic and enchanting silliness! She touches lost chords in one's heart. I love the Chromatic Fantasia of Bach, I am transported by Beethoven's hundred-and-eleventh Sonata; but the fact doesn't prevent my being moved to tears by the last luscious waltz played by the hotel orchestra. In the best constructed brains there are always spongy surfaces that are sensitive to picture postcards and Little Nelly and the End of a Perfect Day. Miss Toomis has found out my Achilles's heel. She is boring, ridiculous, absurd to a degree, but oh! how moving, how adorable.

PAUL. You're done for, my poor Dolphin, sunk—spurlos.

DOLPHIN. And I was getting on so well, was revelling in my

new-found confidence, and, knowing its transience, was exploiting it for all I was worth. I had covered an enormous amount of ground and then, hey presto! at a blow all my labour was undone. Actuated by what malice I don't know, la Lucrezia swoops down like a vulture, and without a by-your-leave or excuse of any kind carries off Miss Toomis from under my very eyes. What a woman! She terrifies me. I am always running away from her.

PAUL. Which means, I suppose, that she is always pursuing you.

DOLPHIN. She has ruined my evening and, it may be, all my chances of success. My precious hour of self-confidence will be wasted (though I hope you'll not take offence at the word)—wasted on you.

PAUL. It will return.

DOLPHIN. But when—but when? Till it does I shall be impotent and in agony.

PAUL. I know the agony of waiting. I myself was engaged to a Rumanian princess in 1916. But owing to the sad collapse in the Rumanian rate of exchange I have had to postpone our union indefinitely. It is painful, but, believe me, it can be borne. (*He looks at the cheque and then at his watch.*) There are other things which are much worse. Believe me, Dolphin, it can be borne.

DOLPHIN. I suppose it can. For, when all is said, there are damned few of us who really take things much to heart. Julie de Lespinasses are happily not common. I am even subnormal. At twenty I believed myself passionate: one does at that age. But now, when I come to consider myself candidly, I find that I am really one of those who never deeply felt nor strongly willed. Everything is profoundly indifferent to me. I sometimes try to depress myself with the thought that the world is a cesspool, that men are pathetic degenerates from the ape whose laboriously manufactured ideals are pure nonsense and find no rhyme in reality, that the whole of life is a bad joke which takes a long time coming to an end. But it really doesn't upset me. I don't care a curse. It's deplorable; one ought to care. The best people do care. Still, I must say I should like to get possession of Miss Toomis. Confound that Grattarol woman. What on earth did she want to rush me like that for, do you suppose?

PAUL. I expect we shall find out now. (*PAUL jerks his head to-*

wards the left. LUCREZIA and AMY are seen entering from the garden. LUCREZIA holds her companion's arm and marches with a firm step towards the two men. AMY suffers herself to be dragged along.)

LUCREZIA. Vicomte, Miss Toomis wants you to tell her all about Correggio.

AMY (rather scared). Oh, really—I . . .

LUCREZIA. And (sternly)—Michelangelo. She is so much interested in art.

AMY. But please—don't trouble . . .

PAUL (bowing gracefully). I shall be delighted. And in return I hope Miss Toomis will tell me all about Longfellow.

AMY (brightening). Oh yes, don't you just love Evangeline?

PAUL. I do; and with your help, Miss Toomis, I hope I shall learn to love her better.

LUCREZIA (to DOLPHIN, who has been looking from AMY to the VICOMTE and back again at AMY with eyes that betray a certain disquietude). You really must come and look at the moon rising over the hills, Mr. Dolphin. One sees it best from the lower terrace. Shall we go?

DOLPHIN (starts and shrinks). But it's rather cold, isn't it? I mean—I think I ought to go and write a letter.

LUCREZIA. Oh, you can do that to-morrow.

DOLPHIN. But really.

LUCREZIA. You've no idea how lovely the moon looks.

DOLPHIN. But I must . . .

LUCREZIA (lays her hand on his sleeve and tows him after her, crying as she goes). The moon, the moon. . . . (PAUL and AMY regard their exit in silence.)

PAUL. He doesn't look as though he much wanted to go and see the moon.

AMY. Perhaps he guesses what's in store for him.

PAUL (surprised). What, you don't mean to say you realised all the time?

AMY. Realised what?

PAUL. About la belle Lucrezia.

AMY. I don't know what you mean. All I know is that she means to give Mr. Dolphin a good talking to. He's so mercenary.

It made me quite indignant when she told me about him. Such a schemer, too! You know in America we have very definite ideas about honour.

PAUL. Here too, Miss Toomis.

AMY. Not Mr. Dolphin. Oh dear, it made me so sad; more sad than angry. I can never be grateful enough to Signorina Grattarol.

PAUL. But I'm still at a loss to know exactly what you're talking about.

AMY. And I am quite bewildered myself. Would you have believed it of him? I thought him such a nice man.

PAUL. What has he done?

AMY. It's all for my money, Miss Grattarol told me. She knows. He was just asking me to marry him, and I believe I would have said Yes. But she came in just in the nick of time. It seems he only wanted to marry me because I'm so rich. He doesn't care for me at all. Miss Grattarol knows what he's like. It's awful, isn't it? Oh dear, I wouldn't have thought it of him.

PAUL. But you must forgive him, Miss Toomis. Money is a great temptation. Perhaps if you gave him another chance . . .

AMY. Impossible.

PAUL. Poor Dolphin! He's such a nice young fellow.

AMY. I thought so too. But he's false.

PAUL. Don't be too hard on him. Money probably means too much to him. It's the fault of his upbringing. No one who has not lived among the traditions of our ancient aristocracy can be expected to have that contempt, almost that hatred of wealth, which is the sign of true nobility. If he had been brought up, as I was, in an old machicolated castle on the Loire, surrounded by ancestral ghosts, imbued with the spirit of the Crusaders and preux chevaliers who had inhabited the place in the past, if he had learnt to know what noblesse oblige really means, believe me, Miss Toomis, he could never have done such a thing.

AMY. I should just think he couldn't, Monsieur de Barbazange.

PAUL. You have no idea, Miss Toomis, how difficult it is for a man of truly noble feelings to get over the fact of your great wealth. When I heard that you were the possessor of a hundred million dollars . . .

AMY. Oh, I'm afraid it's more than that. It's two hundred million.

PAUL. . . . of two hundred million dollars, then . . . it only makes it worse; I was very melancholy, Miss Toomis. For those two hundred million dollars were a barrier, which a descendant of Crusaders and preux chevaliers could not overleap. Honour, Miss Toomis, honour forbade. Ah, if only that accursed money had not stood in the way. . . . When I first saw you—oh, how I was moved by that vision of beauty and innocence—I wanted nothing better than to stand gazing on you for ever. But then I heard about those millions. Dolphin was lucky to have felt no restraints. But enough, enough. (*He checks a rising tide of emotion.*) Give poor Dolphin another chance, Miss Toomis. At bottom he is a good fellow, and he may learn in time to esteem you for your own sake and to forget the dazzling millions.

AMY. Never. I can only marry a man who is entirely disinterested.

PAUL. But, can't you see, no disinterested man could ever bring himself to ask you? How could he prove his disinterestedness? No one would believe the purity of his intentions.

AMY (*much moved*). It is for me to judge. I know a disinterested man when I see him. Even in America we can understand honour.

PAUL (*with a sob in his voice*). Good-bye, Miss Toomis.

AMY. But no, I don't want it to be good-bye.

PAUL. It must be. Never shall it be said of a Barbazange that he hunted a woman for her money.

AMY. But what does it matter what the world says, if I say the opposite?

PAUL. You say the opposite? Thank you, thank you. But no, good-bye.

AMY. Stop. Oh! you're forcing me to do a most unwomanly thing. You're making me ask you to marry me. You're the only disinterested man I've ever met or, to judge from what I've seen of the world, I'm ever likely to meet. Haven't you kept away from me in spite of your feelings? Haven't you even tried to make me listen to another man—a man not worthy to black your boots? Oh, it's so wonderful, so noble! It's like something in a picture play. Paul, I offer myself to you. Will you take me in spite of my millions?

PAUL (*falling on his knees and kissing the hem of AMY's skirt*).



My angel, you're right; what does it matter what the world says as long as you believe in me? Amy, amie, bien-aimee. . . . Ah, it's too good! too, too good to be true! (*He rises to his feet and embraces her with an unfeigned enthusiasm.*)

AMY. Paul, Paul. . . . And so this is love. Isn't it wonderful?

PAUL (*looking round anxiously*). You mustn't tell anyone about our engagement, my Amy. They might say unpleasant things in the hotel, you know.

AMY. Of course I won't talk about it. We'll keep our happiness to ourselves, won't we?

PAUL. Entirely to ourselves; and to-morrow we'll go to Paris and arrange about being married.

AMY. Yes, yes; we'll take the eight o'clock train.

PAUL. Not the eight o'clock, my darling. I have to go to the bank to-morrow to do a little business. We must wait till the twelve-thirty.

AMY. Very well, then. The twelve-thirty. Oh, how happy I am!

PAUL. So am I, my sweetheart. More than I can tell you. (*The sound of a window being opened is heard. They look up and see the BARONESS dressed in a peignoir of the tenderest blue, emerging on to the right hand of the three balconies.*)

AMY. Oh, my soul! I think I'd better go in. Good-night, my Paul. (*She runs in.*)

SIMONE. Has that horrid little American girl gone? (*She peers down; then, reassured, she blows a kiss to PAUL.*) My Romeo!

PAUL. I come, Juliet.

SIMONE. There's a kiss for you.

PAUL (*throwing kisses with both hands*). And there's one for you. And another, and another. Two hundred million kisses, my angel.

SIMONE (*giggling*). What a lot!

PAUL. It is; you're quite right. Two hundred million. . . . I come, my Juliet. (*He darts into the hotel, pausing when just inside the door and out of sight of the BARONESS, to mop himself once again with his enormous handkerchief. The operation over, he advances with a resolute step. The BARONESS stands for a moment on the balcony. Then, seeing DOLPHIN and LUCREZIA coming in from the left, she retires, closing the window and drawing the*

curtains behind her. DOLPHIN comes striding in; LUCREZIA follows a little behind, looking anxiously up at him.)

LUCREZIA. Please, please . . .

DOLPHIN. No, I won't listen to anything more. (*He walks with an agitated step up and down the stage. LUCREZIA stands with one hand resting on the back of a chair and the other pressed on her heart.*) Do you mean to say you deliberately went and told her that I was only after her money? Oh, it's too bad, too bad. It's infamous. And I hadn't the faintest notion that she had any money. Besides, I don't want money; I have quite enough of my own. It's infamous, infamous!

LUCREZIA. I know it was a horrible thing to do. But I couldn't help it. How could I stand by and see you being carried off by that silly little creature?

DOLPHIN. But I cared for her.

LUCREZIA. But not as I cared for you. I've got red blood in my veins; she's got nothing but milk and water. You couldn't have been happy with her. I can give you love of a kind she could never dream of. What does she know of passion?

DOLPHIN. Nothing. I am thankful to say. I don't want passion; can't you understand that? I don't possess it myself and don't like it in others. I am a man of sentimental affections, with a touch of quiet sensuality. I don't want passion, I tell you. It's too violent; it frightens me. I couldn't possibly live with you. You'd utterly shatter my peace of mind in a day. Oh, how I wish you'd go away!

LUCREZIA. But Sidney, Sidney, can't you understand what it is to be madly in love with somebody? You can't be so cruel.

DOLPHIN. You didn't think much of my well-being when you interfered between Miss Toomis and me, did you? You've probably ruined my whole life, that's all. I really don't see why you should expect me to have any pity for you.

LUCREZIA. Very well, then, I shall kill myself. (*She bursts into tears.*)

DOLPHIN. Oh, but I assure you, one doesn't kill oneself for things like that. (*He approaches her and pats her on the shoulder.*) Come, come, don't worry about it.

LUCREZIA (*throws her arms round his neck*). Oh, Sidney, Sidney . . .

DOIPHIN (*freeing himself with surprising energy and promptitude from her embrace*). No, no, none of that, I beg. Another moment and we shall be losing our heads. Personally I think I shall go to bed now. I should advise you to do the same, Miss Grattarol. You're overwrought. We might all be better for a small dose of bromide. (*He goes in.*)

LUCREZIA (*looking up and stretching forth her hands*). Sidney! . . . (*DOIPHIN does not look round, and disappears through the glass door into the hotel. LUCREZIA covers her face with her hands and sits for a little, sobbing silently. The nightingale sings on. Midnight sounds with an infinite melancholy from all the twenty campaniles of the city in the valley. From far away comes the spasmodic throbbing of a guitar and the singing of an Italian voice, high-pitched, passionate, throaty. The seconds pass. LUCREZIA rises to her feet and walks slowly into the hotel. On the threshold she encounters the VICOMTE coming out.*)

PAUL. You, Signorina Lucrezia? I've escaped for a breath of fresh, cool air. Mightn't we take a turn together? (*LUCREZIA shakes her head.*) Ah, well, then, good-night. You'll be glad to hear that Miss Toomis knows all about Correggio now. (*He inhales a deep breath of air. Then looking at his dinner-jacket he begins brushing at it with his hand. A lamentable figure creeps in from the left. It is ALBERTO. If he had a tail, it would be trailing on the ground between his legs.*)

PAUL. Hullo, Alberto. What is it? Been losing at cards?

ALBERTO. Worse than that.

PAUL. Creditors foreclosing?

ALBERTO. Much worse.

PAUL. Father ruined by imprudent speculations?

ALBERTO. No, no, no. It's nothing to do with money.

PAUL. Oh, well, then. It can't be anything very serious. It's women, I suppose.

ALBERTO. My mistress refuses to see me. I have been beating on her door for hours in vain.

PAUL. I wish we all had your luck, Bertino. Mine opens her door only too promptly. The difficulty is to get out again. Does yours use such an awful lot of this evil-smelling powder? I'm simply covered with it. Ugh! (*He brushes his coat again.*)

ALBERTO. Can't you be serious, Paul?

PAUL. Of course I can . . . about a serious matter. But you can't expect me to pull a long face about your mistress, can you, now? Do look at things in their right proportions.

ALBERTO. It's no use talking to you. You're heartless, soulless.

PAUL. What you mean, my dear Alberto, is that I'm relatively speaking bodiless. Physical passion never goes to my head. I'm always *compos mentis*. You aren't, that's all.

ALBERTO. Oh, you disgust me. I think I shall hang myself to-night.

PAUL. Do. It will give us something to talk about at lunch to-morrow.

ALBERTO. Monster! (He goes into the hotel. PAUL strolls out towards the garden, whistling an air from Mozart as he goes. The window on the left opens and LUCREZIA steps on to her balcony. Uncoiled, her red hair falls almost to her waist. Her nightdress is always half slipping off one shoulder or the other, like those loose-bodied Restoration gowns that reveal the tight-blown charms of Kneller's Beauties. Her feet are bare. She is a marvellously romantic figure, as she stands there, leaning on the balustrade, and with eyes more sombre than night, gazing into the darkness. The nightingales, the bells, the guitar, and passionate voice strike up. Great stars palpitate in the sky. The moon has swum imperceptibly to the height of heaven. In the garden below flowers are yielding their souls into the air, censers invisible. It is too much, too much. . . . Large tears roll down LUCREZIA's cheeks and fall with a splash to the ground. Suddenly, but with the noiselessness of a cat, ALBERTO appears, childish-looking in pink pajamas, on the middle of the three balconies. He sees LUCREZIA, but she is much too deeply absorbed in thought to have noticed his coming. ALBERTO plants his elbows on the rail of the balcony, covers his face, and begins to sob, at first inaudibly, then in a gradual quickening crescendo. At the seventh sob LUCREZIA starts and becomes aware of his presence.)

LUCREZIA. Alberto! I didn't know. . . . Have you been there long? (ALBERTO makes no articulate reply, but his sobs keep on growing louder.) Alberto, are you unhappy? Answer me.

ALBERTO (with difficulty, after a pause). Yes.

LUCREZIA. Didn't she let you in?

ALBERTO. No. (His sobs become convulsive.)

LUCREZIA. Poor boy.

ALBERTO (*lifting up a blubbered face to the moonlight*). I am so unhappy.

LUCREZIA. You can't be more unhappy than I am.

ALBERTO. Oh, yes, I am. It's impossible to be unhappier than me.

LUCREZIA. But I am more unhappy.

ALBERTO. You're not. Oh, how can you be so cruel Lucrezia? (*He covers his face once more.*)

LUCREZIA. But I only said I was unhappy, Alberto.

ALBERTO. Yes, I know. That showed you weren't thinking of me. Nobody loves me. I shall hang myself to-night with the cord of my dressing-gown.

LUCREZIA. No, no, Alberto. You mustn't do anything rash.

ALBERTO. I shall. Your cruelty has been the last straw.

LUCREZIA. I'm sorry, Bertino mio. But if you only knew how miserable I was feeling. I didn't mean to be unsympathetic. Poor boy. I'm so sorry. There, don't cry, poor darling.

ALBERTO. Oh, I knew you wouldn't desert me, Lucrezia. You've always been a mother to me. (*He stretches out his hand and seizes hers, which has gone half-way to meet him; but the balconies are too far apart to allow him to kiss it. He makes an effort and fails. He is too short in the body.*) Will you let me come onto your balcony, Lucrezia? I want to tell you how grateful I am.

LUCREZIA. But you can do that from your own balcony.

ALBERTO. Please, please, Lucrezia. You mustn't be cruel to me again. I can't bear it.

LUCREZIA. Well, then. . . . Just for a moment, but for no more. (*BERTINO climbs from one balcony to the other. One is a little reminded of the trousered monkeys on the barrel organs. Arrived, he kneels down and kisses LUCREZIA's hand.*)

ALBERTO. You've saved me. You've given me a fresh desire to live and a fresh faith in life. How can I thank you enough, Lucrezia, darling?

LUCREZIA (*patting his head*). There, there. We are just two unhappy creatures. We must try and comfort one another.

ALBERTO. What a brute I am! I never thought of your happiness. I am so selfish. What is it, Lucrezia?

LUCREZIA. I can't tell you, Bertino; but it's very painful.

ALBERTO. Poor child, poor child. (His kisses, which started at the hand, have mounted, by this time, some way up the arm, changing perceptibly in character as they rise. At the shoulder they have a warmth which could not have been inferred from the respectful salutes which barely touched the fingers.) Poor darling! You've given me consolation. Now you must let me comfort your unhappiness.

LUCREZIA (with an effort). I think you ought to go back now, Bertino.

ALBERTO. In a minute, my darling. There, there, poor Lucrezia. (He puts an arm round her, kisses her hair and neck. LUCREZIA leans her bowed head against his chest. The sound of footsteps is heard. They both look up with scared, wide-open eyes.)

LUCREZIA. We mustn't be seen here, Bertino. What would people think?

ALBERTO. I'll go back.

LUCREZIA. There's no time. You must come into my room. Quickly.

(They slip through the French window, but not quickly enough to have escaped the notice of PAUL, returning from his midnight stroll. The VICOMTE stands for a moment looking up at the empty balcony. He laughs softly to himself, and, throwing his cigarette away, passes through the glass door into the house. All is now silent, save for the nightingales and the distant bells. The curtain comes down for a moment to indicate the passage of several hours. It rises again with the sun. LUCREZIA's window opens and she appears on the balcony. She stands a moment with one foot over the threshold of the long window in a listening pose. Then her eyes fall on the better half of a pair of pink pyjamas lying crumpled on the floor, like a body bereft of its soul; with her bare foot she turns it over. A little shudder plucks at her nerves, and she shakes her head as though, by this symbolic act, to shake off something clinging and contaminating. Then she steps out into the full glory of the early sun, stretching out her arms to the radiance. She bows her face into her hands, crying out loud to herself.)

LUCREZIA. Oh, why, why, why? (The last of these Why's is

*caught by the WAITER, who has crept forth in shirt-sleeves and list-slippers, duster in hand, to clean the tables. He looks up at her admiringly, passes his tongue over his lips. Then, with a sigh, turns to dust the tables.)*

## CURTAIN

# THE RIGHT TO TAKE ONESELF OFF

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AMBROSE BIERCE

BORN: Horse Cave Creek, Meigs County, Ohio, June 24, 1842.

DIED: Mexico? 1914?

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A PERSON WHO LOSES heart and hope through a personal bereavement is like a grain of sand on the seashore complaining that the tide has washed a neighboring grain out of reach. He is worse, for the bereaved grain cannot help itself; it has to be a grain of sand and play the game of tide, win or lose; whereas he can quit—by watching his opportunity can “quit a winner”. For sometimes we do beat “the man who keeps the table”—never in the long run, but infrequently and out of small stakes. But this is no time to “cash in” and go, for you can not take your little winning with you. The time to quit is when you have lost a big stake, your fool hope of eventual success, your fortitude and your love of the game. If you stay in the game, which you are not compelled to do, take your losses in good temper and do not whine about them. They are hard to bear, but that is no reason why you should be.

But we are told with tiresome iteration that we are “put here” for some purpose (not disclosed) and have no right to retire until summoned—it may be by small-pox, it may be by the bludgeon of a blackguard, it may be by the kick of a cow; the “summoning” Power (said to be the same as the “putting” Power) has not a nice taste in the choice of messengers. That “argument” is not worth attention, for it is unsupported by either evidence or any-

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Written for periodical publication and reprinted in *The Shadow on the Dial and Other Essays*, Robertson, San Francisco, 1909.



thing remotely resembling evidence. "Put here." Indeed! And by the keeper of the table who "runs" the "skin game". We were put here by our parents—that is all anybody knows about it; and they had no more authority than we, and probably no more intention.

The notion that we have not the right to take our own lives comes of our consciousness that we have not the courage. It is the plea of the coward—his excuse for continuing to live when he has nothing to live for—or his provision against such a time in the future. If he were not egotist as well as coward he would need no excuse. To one who does not regard himself as the center of creation and his sorrow as the throes of the universe, life, if not worth living, is also not worth leaving. The ancient philosopher who was asked why he did not die if, as he taught, life was no better than death, replied: "Because death is no better than life." We do not know that either proposition is true, but the matter is not worth bothering about, for both states are supportable—life despite its pleasures and death despite its repose.

It was Robert G. Ingersoll's opinion that there is rather too little than too much suicide in the world—that people are so cowardly as to live on long after endurance has ceased to be a virtue. This view is but a return to the wisdom of the ancients, in whose splendid civilization suicide had as honorable place as any other courageous, reasonable and unselfish act. Antony, Brutus, Cato, Seneca—these were not of the kind of men to do deeds of cowardice and folly. The smug, self-righteous modern way of looking upon the act as that of a craven or a lunatic is the creation of priests, Philistines and women. If courage is manifest in endurance of profitless discomfort it is cowardice to warm oneself when cold, to cure oneself when ill, to drive away mosquitoes, to go in when it rains. The "pursuit of happiness", then, is not an "inalienable right", for that implies avoidance of pain. No principle is involved in this matter; suicide is justifiable or not, according to circumstances; each case is to be considered on its merits and he having the act under advisement is sole judge. To his decision, made with whatever light he may chance to have, all honest minds will bow. The appellant has no court to which to take his appeal. Nowhere is a jurisdiction so comprehensive as to embrace the right of condemning the wretched to life.

Suicide is always courageous. We call it courage in a soldier merely to face death—say to lead a forlorn hope—although he has a chance of life and a certainty of “glory”. But the suicide does more than face death; he incurs it, and with a certainty, not of glory, but of reproach. If that is not courage we must reform our vocabulary.

True, there may be a higher courage in living than in dying—a moral courage greater than physical. The courage of the suicide, like that of the pirate, is not incompatible with a selfish disregard of the rights and interests of others—a cruel recreancy to duty and decency. I have been asked: “Do you not think it cowardly when a man leaves his family unprovided for, to end his life, because he is dissatisfied with life in general?” No, I do not; I think it selfish and cruel. Is not that enough to say of it? Must we distort words from their true meaning in order more effectually to damn the act and cover its author with a greater infamy? A word means something; despite the maunderings of the lexicographers, it does not mean whatever you want it to mean. “Cowardice” means the fear of danger, not the shirking of duty. The writer who allows himself as much liberty in the use of words as he is allowed by the dictionary-maker and by popular consent is a bad writer. He can make no impression on his reader, and would do better service at the ribbon-counter.

The ethics of suicide is not a simple matter; one can not lay down laws of universal application, but each case is to be judged, if judged at all, with a full knowledge of all the circumstances, including the mental and moral make-up of the person taking his own life—an impossible qualification for judgment. One’s time, race and religion have much to do with it. Some people, like the ancient Romans and the modern Japanese, have considered suicide in certain circumstances honorable and obligatory; among ourselves it is held in disfavor. A man of sense will not give much attention to considerations of that kind, excepting in so far as they affect others, but in judging weak offenders they are to be taken into the account. Speaking generally, then, I should say that in our time and country the following persons (and some others) are justified in removing themselves, and that to some of them it is a duty:

One afflicted with a painful or loathsome and incurable disease.

One who is a heavy burden to his friends, with no prospect of their relief.

One threatened with permanent insanity.

One irreclaimably addicted to drunkenness or some similarly destructive or offensive habit.

One without friends, property, employment or hope.

One who has disgraced himself.

Why do we honor the valiant soldier, sailor, fireman? For obedience to duty: Not at all; that alone—without the peril—seldom elicits remark, never evokes enthusiasm. It is because he faced without flinching the risk of that supreme disaster—or what we feel to be such—death. But look you: the soldier braves the danger of death; the suicide braves death itself! The leader of the forlorn hope may not be struck. The sailor who voluntarily goes down with his ship may be picked up or cast ashore. It is not certain that the wall will topple until the fireman shall have descended with his precious burden. But the suicide—his is the foeman that never missed a mark, his the sea that gives nothing back; the wall that he mounts bears no man's weight. And his, at the end of it all, is the dishonored grave where the wild ass of public opinion

“Stamps o'er his head but can not break his sleep.”

# THE FABLE OF THE ALL-NIGHT SEANCE & THE LIMIT THAT CEASED TO BE

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GEORGE ADE

BORN: Kentland, Indiana, February 9, 1866. DIED: May 16, 1944.

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FOUR REPUTABLE Business Men sat down at the Green Baize to flirt with the Goddess of Fortune for one Hour, no more, no less. The Married Men did not want to go Home too early for fear that it would be too much of a Shock to their Wives.

These four Good Fellows may be designated as Adams, Brown, Collins and Davis, for fear the Children get hold of the Book. They were up in Adams' Room. Some one remarked that it was the mere Shank of the Evening—just the Fringe of the Night, as it were—and it seemed a Shame to pull for Home while so many other and more attractive Resorts were still open. So Adams brought out the necessary Tools and the four Comrades squared away.

It was to be a Gentleman's Game. No one at the Table wanted to take Money out of a Friend's Pocket. They put on an easy Limit of 10 Cents, so that no one could win or lose enough to Hurt. They had to make it an Object in order to keep their Blood in Circulation, but it was agreed that one fleeting Hour of 10-Cent Limit would not make or break any one. And it was positively understood and agreed that when the Cuckoo Clock hooted for Eleven O'clock, that was to be the Signal. Adams had been out the Night before with a Bad Man from Council Bluffs, and he wanted to make up a few Hours of Slumber. Brown had to figure

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Written in 1900, published in *Forty Modern Fables*, N. Y., 1901.

on a Contract next Day, and he needed Eight Hours so as to show up with a Clear Head. Collins said he had a couple of Black Marks standing against him and if he didn't get in by Midnight, he might lose his Latch-Key. Davis said he was glad they were going to make it a Brief Session as the Electric Light hurt his Eyes. It seemed that not one had more than an Hour to spare.

It was a beautiful Get-Away. All the Stacks were the same size, neatly built up into Stand-Pipes of Red, White and Blue. The Cards riffled smoothly and the Dove of Peace seemed to hover over the Round Table. Each Man lighted an eight-inch Perfecto and got it slanted up so as to keep the Smoke out of his Eyes. He was feeling Immense because he counted on pulling out about Five Bones and buying a Hat with it.

Inasmuch as they were playing in Adams' Room and he was providing all the wet and dry Provisions, they felt at liberty to jounce him. A Host is not supposed to act Peevish, no matter what they do to him. So what they did to Adams was a Plenty. It was only a measly little Child's Game with a Come In of Two call Five and a Blue Seed for the Outside Bet, but when two of them got Adams in between them and started the Whip-Saw, they left him with nothing but Whites. He died like an Outcast with three Type-Writers clutched in his Salary Hook.

He touched up the Bone Yard in a low, injured Tone of Voice and they could notice the Gloom curdling on his side of the Table. In a few Moments he tried to Get Back by making it Expensive to Draw. Davis picked up two Cards and filled a Straight and he lit on Mr. Bluffer all spraddled out. It was about this time that Adams began to get Red around the Ears. He told them to be careful where they dropped their Ashes, as the Rug they were sitting on was a genuine Bokhara and had stood him more than Two Hundred. They asked him if he was Sore, and he said he was not, but he hated to sit in with a Farmer who would hold up Three, open in the Middle, and then Fill. Any one who would do that ought to be Arrested. Davis remarked that their Host was an Imitation Sport who ought to be out playing Mumblety-Peg or Croquet. Davis had a long Breastwork of Plush in front of him and he was full of Conversation. He told Adams that if they injured the Rug he would buy another.

In the meantime the Short Hand had crept up toward XI. Davis kept calling Attention to the Fact that the Time was just about up. He wanted to get his Velvet and Dig. The Electric Light was hurting his Eyes worse than ever.

But when the Hour struck, Adams was just beginning to be keen for Trouble. He told them to forget the Clock. He threw the Jonah Deck into the Grate, broke a fresh Pack, walked around his Chair three times, took off his Coat and gave Fair Warning that all Boys and Cripples must get back of the Ropes. He rung in a new Rule that any one who bet less than 50 Cents would be considered a Gazabe. He put in a Patent Corkscrew for a Buck and said it called for a Jack Pot every time it came out with the Ante. He hoped that all of the Old Ladies and the Safe Players would dust the Cracked Ice out of their Laps and get Busy. He said if they tried hard they could get Action for their Money on something less than Threes.

Of course, they had agreed to chop off at Eleven, but they could not play Quitter on their Host while he was so deep in the Hole, so they all came down to their Shirt Sleeves and got ready for Rough Work. They began to Edge with the Colored Beans and Friendship ceased. Adams had a Run of Luck and he crowded it. Every time he skun his First Set and found it promising, he raised them out of their Chairs. It was a Half Dollar per Throw and somebody was thrown every Deal. Before long he had them Buying, and Brown had opened a Tab with the Bank.

Adams begun to hum a Popular Air, just to show that he could Gamble without losing his Temper. He had All Kinds corded up in front of him and he was exceeding Blithe. He said he was going to buy some nice Etchings for his Room and put in an Ice-Box and have everything Right in case a few Friends dropped in like this. Then he glanced up at the Clock and said that probably they had better make it Midnight. At this the other three let out a Roar that would have been a Credit to Niagara. They said they were going to Hang On until they got Revenge. He explained that somebody had to quit Loser and besides, they couldn't sit up all Night. The Doctor had told him to get plenty of Sleep. They scoffed at him and told him to get a Hot Brick and put his Feet on it.

Brown arose and removed his flowered Waistcoat, rolled up his Sleeves and said they would let up on Fooling and begin in Earnest. They would play nothing but Jacks and it would cost One Dollar to Associate. With that they closed in and every Man was playing so near to his Shirt Bosom that he had to back off to read his Hand. The Light Conversation had died away. It was now a Case of getting the Heart's Blood. They talked in low, sick-room Whispers and eyed one another stealthily. Each of the four wondered if the Game was absolutely on the Square.

Along about 2 o'clock after the Luck had been see-sawing, Brown had four Trays and refused to take Cards. Two Full Hands came out against him and that was what led up to the Slaughter. When a Person stands Pat, it is the crafty Supposition that he has a Flush or a Straight. To hold the Extra Card as a Blind for Fours is justly regarded as an Act of Low Cunning. When the Smoke and Dust cleared away, Brown had everything in sight and was beginning to Yawn slightly and look at his Watch. The others were drawing on the Bank and telling what they might have done if the Cards hadn't come just as they did.

Adams had been Cleaned properly, and he was so Mad he was breathing through his Nose. He produced his Bank-Book to show that he was Good for any Amount, and then he abolished the Limit and announced that he was out for Gore and would show no Quarter.

Then the Game settled down to the Kind in which somebody lays \$14 on a Pair of Sevens and gets whooped \$9 by some other Desperado holding Nines, and nobody bats an Eyelash.

At 4 o'clock Brown, who was still intrenched behind his Earnings, suggested that they play one Round of Jack Pots for Five Bucks and then settle up. This was reluctantly agreed to. In this Grand Finale some tall Hands were dealt and they didn't do a Thing to Brown. So he called for just one more Round and everybody locked Horns and began all over again.

At 6 o'clock when the Hot Sunlight fell athwart the Table the Room resembled a Roustabout Bar-Room. Four Haggard Beings, scantily Clad, sat at the Table and weakly endeavored to Bump one another. Adams was out a Month's Salary and was Dead on his Feet. Brown had worked like a Dog all night and had nothing

to show for it except a Head and a Debit of \$3.50. Collins had most of the Chips, but he would have given a Thousand to get out of going Home and facing Pct. Davis had been running the Bank, and he never will know how he came out. He had two Envelopes covered with Marks, and after the others Cashed In, he didn't have any Money with which to redeem his own Checks. He asked what he had better do, and no one answered. They had Troubles of their own.

After they left and Adams put his Head under the Faucet, he said he was going to swear off on making his Room a Hang-Out for Sharks. And when they were safely outside, they agreed that Men with Homes ought to keep away from the Rounder Element. And everybody said "Never Again."

MORAL: Play Muggins, and then you will be glad to Quit at any time.



# A NEW PLEASURE

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PIERRE LOUYS

BORN: Paris, December 10, 1870. DIED: Passy, June 4, 1925.

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MR. GLADSTONE (Before a map):

What are these two mountains, near the sources of the Nile?

Mr. Stanley:

They are the mountains Gordon-Bennett-Mackay.

Mr. Gladstone:

Who gave them those ridiculous names?

Mr. Stanley:

It is I, sir, who discovered them.

Mr. Gladstone:

Oh! no. They were discovered twenty-three centuries ago by Herodotus.

(Daily News. 1896.)

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Four years ago, perhaps five, I was living for several days each week in a small, but quiet and well furnished ground floor, in a street which communicated at one end with the little Monceau Park. This detail was of no interest to me, for the gate was always closed in the evening before midnight, so that I could not walk there precisely at the hour when I best liked the open air.

One night I found myself there, in silent conversation with two blue pottery cats crouched upon a white table, hesitating in choice between two ways of whiling away the solitude: writing a sonnet

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Written about 1899.

and smoking cigarettes, or smoking cigarettes and staring at the ceiling.

The important point is always to have a cigarette at hand; it surrounds objects with a delicate, celestial tint which blends lights and shadows, effaces angles and, by an ensorcelling perfume, casts over the restless spirit a variable balance from which it falls into dreams.

This evening, I had the intention to write and the desire to do nothing; in other words, the evening seemed likely to end, like all the others, before a virgin sheet of paper and an ash-tray full of cadavers, when I was drawn from my thoughts by a ring at the neglected bell.

I raised my head. I satisfied myself that, on Friday the ninth of June, I expected no one at this hour of the night, but, when a second ring followed closely on the first, I went to the door and drew the lock.

Opening the door, I saw a woman.

She was enveloped in a flowing cloak which was of woollen cloth like a traveler's cloak, but woven in figures like a ball wrap. This was closed about her neck with a gathering of chenille from which her head barely emerged, brown under her blond tinted hair. Her face was young, sensual, a little mocking; two eyes very dark, a mouth very red.

"Wilt thou let me in, please?" she asked, inclining her head upon a shoulder.

I drew back with the singular astonishment of a man who sees entering his house, at an hour one scarcely receives even the closest friends, a woman of whom he could recall no memory and who, with her first words, addressed him with a familiar "thou."

"Dear friend," I said timidly, when I had followed her into my room, "Dear friend, do not blame me; I recognize thee perfectly but by some misfortune I cannot at the moment recall thy name. Is it Lucien? or Tototte?"

She smiled indulgently and, without replying, took off her cloak. Her robe was of water-green silk, ornamented with great irises woven in the cloth itself, the stems ascending along the body to the low, square-cut opening which left exposed the tops of the breasts. One each arm she wore a little golden serpent with emerald

eyes. A necklace of great pearls in two ropes shone upon her dark skin, marking the base of the neck which was rounded and lithe.

"If thou dost recognize me," she said, "it is because thou hast seen me in some dream. I am Callisto, the daughter of Lamia. For eighteen hundred years my tomb remained in peace in the flowery woods of Daphne, near the hills which once were voluptuous Antioch. But now the tombs have traveled. They bore me away to Paris and my shadow followed the stone which contains my fragile ashes. For a long time I slept in the glacial caverns of the Louvre. I might have been there forever, if a noble pagan, a holy man, M. Louis Menard, the only one who, today, remembers the rites and divine ceremonies, had not pronounced before my tomb the traditional words which give to the wretched dead an ephemeral and nocturnal life. For seven hours each night I can walk in thy squalid city . . ."

"Oh! Poor girl!" I interrupted. "How changed thou must find the world!"

"Yes and no. I find the houses dark, the costumes ugly and the sky dismal; (what singular idea brings you to live in such a climate!) I find life is more confused and the people look unhappier; but if I have been surprised, it has been to see again, on every side, all the things I have known. What! in eighteen centuries you have accomplished no more than this! Nothing new? Nothing better, truly? What I have seen in your streets, in your parks, in your houses, is that all, is that really all? . . . How miserable, my friend!"

The astonishment she caused held me speechless. She smiled and explained:

"Thou seest how I am dressed?" she asked. "I am wearing the robe which was placed with me in the tomb. Behold it. In my time, people clothed themselves in wool, in flax, and in silk. Returning to the earth, I thought to find these old stuffs lost even to memory. I imagined (forgive me) that after so many years men would have discovered marvelous tissues like the sunlight or moonlight and more delightful to touch than the skin of a virgin or a fruit. But no; how do you clothe yourselves? in wool, in flax and in silk . . . Oh! I know: you have found cotton, fit to clothe

negroes who were inconvenient as they were. This is, perhaps, extremely moral . . . Thou likest cotton? Thou art proud of its discovery? As for me, I could not bear to touch this stuff which clings and falls apart. Have you, indeed, a stuff to drape better than wool? no; finer than the woven flax? more luminous than silk? . . . But answer thyself."

She continued:

"In my day, we shod ourselves with skins . . . We had sandals, colored shoes, furred slippers, high boots . . . thine own shoes, fastened with a loop a little higher, are of Phrygian form. Look at mine: they are of olive morocco, gilded from little irons, like the binding of a book. Admire them. Thou wilt find none so lovely in the shops of thy friends' tradesmen."

She continued further:

"In my day, to make jewelry, two precious metals were used: gold and silver. Have you found a third? Necklaces were made, rings, bracelets, ear-rings, diadems and brooches. I have found all these, identically, along the streets of Paris. You know the pearl, the emerald, the diamond, the opal, the moonstone, the ruby, the sapphire and all the tinted silicas which come from Arabia and India, today, as formerly. Have you, by any chance, created one precious stone in eighteen centuries? But one, tell me of one, I pray thee! one stone which I have not known, one ring which I have not had on my fingers, one new jewel, even mounted in gold like mine, since thou hast no rarer metal to offer me, but bearing in its claws a new gem?"

Her voice had become animated, little by little, to a tone of reproach and vexation. I made a quieting gesture.

"Callisto," I replied, "I think thou attachest an exaggerated importance to the ornaments which women wear and which have no other purpose than to occupy, by their difficult choice and fastidious form, a stagnant and idle life. It is evident today, after ten thousand years of fruitless efforts among all people, that a young girl will never know how to be more beautiful by the art of the dress-maker, the embroiderer and the goldsmith than at the instant when she shows herself all naked, as the gods created her. I doubt not that the Greeks knew this simple costume. . . ."

"Better than thy compatriots,"

"Do not be proud. You did not invent it. I know that, in our days, it is more disguised than in the time when thou wert born; but, at the worst, of what importance is the difference? One cannot dress women. That is axiomatic. We will not combat it. If the æsthetic truths could be demonstrated from theorems, M. Poincaré could already have proved mathematically that it is futile to exercise human imagination in an attempt to solve this problem; as certain an impossibility as the trisection of angles. For my part, I am not afflicted by the failure, since it is eternal, and I am contented to admire woman in her primitive purity (which, for her, never changes) with the antique emotion of those who once touched Helen."

She regarded me steadily and, inclining her head toward me, said slowly:

"Art thou sure, presumptuous one, that women have not changed?"

In my agitation, I know not whether I saw what she did immediately after saying these words.

How she removed her rings, slipped off her bracelets, opened her necklace, let her vestments fall and, at the same time, her thick hair, I could not say. It was so rapid and dazzling that it remains in my memory like a dim wonder.

Until then, I had not entirely believed in the reality of the adventure. Apparitions long believed supernatural and therefore recognized as obedient to the laws of a profound but unknown nature sometimes present themselves with aspects of a material form which is not questioned by any of our senses and which can mislead even a spirit which is incredulous or fortified against improbabilities.

I had been asking myself for an hour whether I was not being mystified by some extravagant reader; some stranger, I thought, immodest and deliberate enough to come at night to a bed-chamber where she had certainly not been invited, attempting, no doubt, to cover the banal design which moved her by a careful dissimulation under a costume from the theatre. I had responded in the mood to which she herself conducted, with the reserve of a complaisant interlocutor who, through deference or curiosity, would not rend too quickly the tissue of a careful and interesting comedy.

But, as soon as she was nude, I knew that she had come to me from the distant past . . .

I remember very well that, at the moment I realized this, I approached, if I did not achieve, all the exaltation with which a religious instinct invincibly inspires me. I held myself in my chair to keep from falling on my knees and I gazed, my head forward, with a feeling of sacrilege, as though so marvelous a being should not be beheld by the same eyes which had seen mortal women. I had never known such agitation.

Callisto was superb. Her body was slender and rounded, the torso high, the legs very long. Her fine joints were of a fragility which ravished me and even in the muscular thighs one divined the delicate bones. Depilated, but pure and without cosmetics, her skin shone as though fresh from the bath, browned in a light, uniform tint, almost black about the breasts, along the edges of the eye-lids and in the short line of sex. I know not how to describe her beauty which could never be developed in our climate or in our age, for it was not born of any one detail but only of harmony and perhaps of clarity. To affirm a difference between her and the women of my time, I was obliged to believe without any proof for my discernment, as a collector distinguishes the true from the false, sometimes without being able to demonstrate the exact point upon which he established his conviction.

As though placing herself at my disposal, she extended herself upon a couch.

"You could, at least, have brought women to perfection," she resumed, smiling; "and, as thou seest, the races have deteriorated. Why have your doctors, who despise ours, left your mistresses, today, less beautiful than my sisters? The earth where we had lived has not been engulfed. The Orontes descends always from the midst of the cedar mountains. Smyrna survives. Sparta is dead but Athens has been resurrected. Vain and feeble century, why hast thou replaced the Ionians with a mixture of Levantines and why hast thou not created selections of women as thou hast created families of roses? Thou canst not. Thine effort is that of a child. Ours was that of gods."

While she spoke (I was scarcely in a mood to dispute with her), a terror such as one feels on the borderland of sleep pressed my temples. I trembled lest she suddenly leave me, like a fluid

being, an offspring of the light; and I asked if my eyes only had the illusion of her corporal presence; if, with the tip of my finger, I could touch her delicate skin.

"Come," she said, laughing, "I am not a shadow. Give me thy hand."

Arching her loins upon the couch, she passed my arm about her body which pressed voluptuously upon my fingers.

Then, with a waywardness which would take no denial, she resumed her discourse.

"A thousand years before the time of my beauty, men united with women somewhat as goats united. Thou hast read Homer? Neither Argos nor Troy knew of other pleasures than those contained in the savage acts of animals. Even the kiss upon the mouth was unknown to Briseis. Andromache never offered her breasts to other lips than those of her little child. About Helen's thighs no hand ever opened and lightly raised the shiverings born of the human caress."

She closed her eyes. . . .

"And then, suddenly, in a day, the peoples of the antique Orient where I was born received from the gods, like a fire eternally young, the sole gift which distinguished them from the other inhabitants of the world: they discovered voluptuousness.

"O days of strength! youth of the world! For the first time, the lips of a man and a woman, leaving fruits, found themselves savory. The great burning soul of Aphrodite inspired the bodies of lovers and, each day, a new pleasure—a new pleasure, thou understandest—descended from blue Olympia into the great, groaning beds. There was an intoxication unrestrained; from Babylon to Mount Erix, all the perfumes, all the silks, the flowers, the arts and the women, formed in the triumph which followed the discovery of joy. The young girls, at last liberated from hereditary barbarousness, conscious of their senses and of their desires, opened their nostrils to the rose and their charming bodies to the mouth. During the centuries, the treasure of sensuality was augmented. In my time, in Antioch and in Alexandria, the women enriched it still more. I myself, Callisto, the daughter of Lamia, it is I who discovered this . . ."

But I drew back . . .

She laughed.

"Ah! Thou art afraid! Well then, we will speak of thy time; let us see! During the nineteen hundred years of my slumber in the tomb, what unknown joy have you conquered? For an hour I have been asking thee for a new pearl. Now I ask thee for a love which I have not already tried. Without doubt, after so long a time, many new pleasures have been discovered. I await thine invitation to partake of them."

She was secure in her ironic position and I divined that, during her long nocturnal wanderings about the city, she had tried in vain to complete her education; also, that I could give nothing in this impossible search.

"Be patient," I said simply. "Thou seest, we have begun by forgetting everything. Later, we will reinvent. This is the history of modern civilization. It came to the world a few years after thy death, after unexampled calamities great enough to be irreparable. First came the birth and singular fortune of a religion which, in its origin, was assuredly commendable but which, distorted by Israelites too rude or too adroit, rendered barren the efforts of thy race and scattered salt upon the ruins of Athens. Following this came the invasion of Barbarians; when the deluge of Judea had rotted the wood of the vessel, the rats penetrated there and scattered it in pieces. This endured until the new day when the books saved from destruction and recovered at Constantinople arose in the Orient like a new dawn. An hundred years were spent reading them. Since they have been studied, three painful centuries have passed. But the time is for us, perhaps. We must be for the time, Callisto."

She smiled in derision.

"Hast thou found," she responded, "in the parchments of thy museums, the tradition of Rhodopis? Can your archaeologists, who possess so thoroughly the policies of Pericles and the strategy of Alexander, reconstruct the science of Aspasia and of Thais? Do they know whether the tomb in which the delicate ashes of Phryne repose, has not enclosed forever the secret of a lost voluptuousness?"

"This tradition I have still. Wouldst thou know it? I will yield it to thee . . ."



Whatever may be the curiosity of the young girls who read this fragment of memories, I will not pause to dwell on a description of that which followed; first, because I have already written, upon the documents of Callisto, an entire book which is called "Aphrodite"; and then, because a certain reserve restrains me, perhaps, from presenting, under a personal form, the details of a night of excesses.

Callisto arose toward noon. She caused me to observe pleasantly that the sun was already high and that, through need of a perfected lighting system, we had but glimpsed each other.

"You ruin the Night; you no longer know the Dawn," she said, sadly. "Formerly, the spectacle of the gleam of dawn was the recompense for long, exhausting vigils. Now you pass your lives in a monotonous light and you do not even know the Shadows."

I was uneasy.

"Noon! . . . But did I not hear thee speak of a life confined to nocturnal hours. How can I still hold thee here?"

"That is an affair between Persephone and myself," she replied, with a singular smile. "Let us talk. I have not finished abusing thine epoch."

I was a little tired, and still nervous.

"Enough," I said, "I pray thee. Let us talk of ourselves, wilt thou? Let us leave the world, better or worse . . . I am interested only in thee."

"Still, hear me. Thou hast not been convinced. I will continue until thou art. Truly, I remain desolated at my second journey upon earth. I should have remained in the tomb, with the dreams of the purer age in which I grew up amidst pleasures. I need to tell someone about the deceptions which end my promenade and what I wish to thy century for all the surprises which it has not offered me. Seest thou, the world is a young man who gives hopes but who is likely to misfire his life."

"I know not. . . . It seems to me that we have thought well and created well since thy death. The age in which we live is not so contemptuous."

"But it is! Partly from its impotence but more from its conceit. No! you have not thought and you have not created! Your people dress like Phoenicians, reproducing the models invented by my

race, but elsewhere than with us you find nothing, and you exist only in our shadow."

She made a gesture.

"Walk in the streets of Paris. Everywhere our eternal soul shines in the facades of the monuments, in the capitals of the columns and on the foreheads of the statues. After having built, during the barbarous and wretched middle ages, those miserable buildings which are already (happily!) falling, you, the men of modern times, have returned to our ruins and, for four hundred years, have made mosaics of stone with the fragments of our temples. A column found in Sicily has engendered two thousand churches and as many railroad platforms. Even to new requirements you have not known how to give a new architecture. With the bronze of your cannons you have copied the Trajan column, and you have made concert halls Corinthian in style. After us, with our sculptors who wrought in marble and cast in bronze, you have found nothing, not a natural stone, not a chemical alloy, worthy of reproducing the human figure. And the only glory of your sculptors is not from that which they have done, but because one has found, in the ground, a torso of Apollonius, a wreck without head, without arms and without legs, a lamentable ruin, but a created work, that; a creative work. Scholars!"

She took two books from a case and threw them upon the carpet.

"Your thought, like your art, is a parasite upon our cadavers. It is not Descartes, it was Parmenides who said that thought is identical with being. It is not Kant, it was still Parmenides who said that thought is identical with its object. In these two phrases, the modern schools are entirely encased; they cannot emerge. Wherever our science became general, that is to say, philosophical, there it has remained, to this day, upon our fundamental laws. The masters of Euclid fixed forever the unchangeable relation of lines. Archimedes supplied integral calculus long before your Leibniz who was equally indebted to us for his metaphysics. In place of meditating upon the fall of apples, Newton, whom you venerate, could have limited himself to reading a page from Aristotle where his theory of universal gravity was expounded two thousand years ago. Upon the constitution of matter, which is the problem of

God, Democritus knew more than Lord Kelvin; his hypothesis alone remains admissible. Finally, at the moment when you are upon the point of conceiving a central and universal science, with a law sufficient to explain all phenomena—what is this science and what is this law? no more than that to which Heraclitus, two thousand four hundred years ago, gave this definitive expression:—fire transforms in movement; movement transforms in fire; and this is the world.”

I was exhausted.

“O Callisto,” I supplicated, “hear my winged words; thou art much too learned. I had often heard that the antique courtesans were women of rare intellectuality, but it was not this, certainly, which made them so beautiful. Today, if Madame de Pougy, in spite of her great literary talent, wished to entertain M. Boutroux with the subjects which preoccupy him, she would not succeed in interesting him as much as an Aspasia speaking to Xenophon. And yet I would prefer to have her tell me more willingly about a robe from Jacques Doucet than about a thermo-dynamic law, and it is a conversation which would be more becoming to her supple body. Moreover, the charm of a woman always increases at the moment when she remains silent; but this is a special truth which is obvious only to men.”

She waited silently until I had finished; then, with a victorious obstinacy, she resumed:

“How is it that, in two thousand years, you have discovered neither . . .”

“We discovered America,” I interrupted, impatiently.

“That is not true!”

“Callisto, do not be absurd.”

“I repeat, and I will maintain, that America was discovered by Aristotle and that this is not a paradoxical thesis but a fact historical and patent. Aristotle knew that the world is round and (as thou canst read in his books), he advised a search for the road to the Indies ‘by the west, beyond the columns of Heracles.’ It was this project which Columbus resumed. But one has always reckoned that the glory of a discovery remains with the brain which conceives it and not with the one which executes it. When Leverrier discovered Neptune . . .”

"Ah, well," I said, consumed with lassitude, "at least thou wilt allow this: we discovered Neptune."

"And when was this! You discovered Neptune! Thou art astonishing! Since yesterday I have been supplicating thee to reveal a new pleasure to me, a conquest toward happiness, a victory over tears. And you have discovered Neptune! I return to life, after twenty centuries, concerned about everything, jealous of the marvels I supposed invented, beseeching, if I were not to weep through my life of eternal shadow, to be returned quickly to the world; and someone has discovered Neptune! A pleasure! a pleasure! a pleasure of the spirit or a pleasure of the senses; it does not matter which! Must I descend again to the Elysian fields without bearing with me the quiver of a new delight?"

She extended her hands. . . . Then, brusquely:

"Anyway, it was Pythagoras who discovered Neptune."

I subsided.

"Absolutely," she declared, inexorably, "Pythagoras found that the solar system was composed of ten stars. I do not know upon what he founded this number; but his disciple, Philolaos, came to discern, later, without any lensed instrument, and many centuries before Copernicus, the double movement of the earth upon its axis and about the central fire; although no doubt it is impossible for three to really understand how such a discovery could have been established with the sole assistance of reason, thou hast no right to assume that the hypothesis of Pythagoras was advanced rashly and confirmed by accident. I have finished."

I contended no more.

"Wilt thou have a cigarette?" I asked.

"What?"

"I say: wilt thou have a cigarette? No doubt they also have come to us from Greece. Perhaps it was Aristotle who . . ."

"No. I had never seen them before. I admit that we were ignorant of this absurd habit of filling the mouth with the smoke of leaves. But I do not suppose thou wouldst pretend to offer me this as a pleasure."

"Who knows. Hast thou tried?"

"Never! What, art thou also one of those who indulge in this ridiculous exercise?"

"Sixty times each day. It is, even, the sole regular occupation in which I willingly employ my life."

"And it pleases thee?"

"I really believe I could resign myself to not touching the hand of a woman for an entire week, sooner than separate from my cigarettes for the same length of time."

"Thou art exaggerating."

"Scarcely any."

She had become thoughtful.

"Ah well, give me a cigarette."

"I would suggest it."

"Light it. What does one do? Breathe?"

"Young girls puff the smoke; but that is not the best way. It is better to really inhale. Draw in. Close the eyes. Again . . ."

After some minutes, Callisto's little roll of oriental leaves was in ashes. She dropped the half-consumed end where the fard of her lips had left a trace of rouge.

There was a silence.

She would not look at me. She had taken the square package in her hand which seemed agitated by a soft emotion, and, after she had examined it on all sides, I saw that she would not return it.

Slowly, with the care one bestows upon the most precious objects, she placed it near the ash-tray at the edge of a bright divan on which she stretched out her long, dark body.

## MORLVERA

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### SAKI

BORN: Akyab, Burma, December 18, 1870.

DIED: "Left of Beaumont Hamel," France, November 13, 1916.

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THE OLYMPIC TOY EMPORIUM occupied a conspicuous frontage in an important West End street. It was happily named Toy Emporium, because one would never have dreamed of according it the familiar and yet pulse-quickenning name of toyshop. There was an air of cold splendour and elaborate failure about the wares that were set out in its ample windows; they were the sort of toys that a tired shop-assistant displays and explains at Christmas-time to exclamatory parents and bored, silent children. The animal toys looked more like natural history models than the comfortable, sympathetic companions that one would wish, at a certain age, to take to bed with one, and to smuggle into the bath-room. The mechanical toys incessantly did things that no one could want a toy to do more than half a dozen times in its lifetime; it was a merciful reflection that in any right-minded nursery the lifetime would certainly be short.

Prominent among the elegantly dressed dolls that filled an entire section of the window frontage was a large hobble-skirted lady in a confection of peach-coloured velvet, elaborately set off with leopard-skin accessories, if one may use such a conveniently comprehensive word in describing an intricate feminine toilette. She lacked nothing that is to be found in a carefully detailed fashion-plate—in fact, she might be said to have something more

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Written for periodical publication and first published in a book posthumously, *The Toys of Peace*, 1923.

than the average fashion-plate female possesses; in place of a vacant, expressionless stare she had character in her face. It must be admitted that it was bad character, cold, hostile, inquisitorial, with a sinister lowering of one eyebrow and a merciless hardness about the corners of the mouth. One might have imagined histories about her by the hour, histories in which unworthy ambition, the desire for money, and an entire absence of all decent feeling would play a conspicuous part.

As a matter of fact, she was not without her judges and biographers, even in this shop-window stage of her career. Emmeline, aged ten, and Bert, aged seven, had halted on the way from their obscure back street to the minnow-stocked water of St. James's Park, and were critically examining the hobble-skirted doll, and dissecting her character in no very tolerant spirit. There is probably a latent enmity between the necessarily under-clad and the unnecessarily over-dressed, but a little kindness and good-fellowship on the part of the latter will often change the sentiment to admiring devotion; if the lady in peach-coloured velvet and leopard skin had worn a pleasant expression in addition to her other elaborate furnishings, Emmeline at least might have respected and even loved her. As it was, she gave her a horrible reputation, based chiefly on a second-hand knowledge of gilded depravity derived from the conversation of those who were skilled in the art of novel-ette reading; Bert filled in a few damaging details from his own limited imagination.

"She's a bad lot, that one is," declared Emmeline, after a long unfriendly stare; "'er 'usbind 'ates 'er."

"'E knocks 'er abart," said Bert with enthusiasm.

"No, 'e don't, cos 'e's dead; she poisoned 'im slow and gradual, so that nobody didn't know. Now she wants to marry a lord, with 'caps and 'caps of money. 'E's got a wife already, but she's going to poison 'er, too."

"She's a bad lot," said Bert with growing hostility.

"'Er mother 'ates her, and she's afraid of 'er, too, cos she's got a serkestic tongue; always talking serkesms, she is. She's greedy, too; if there's fish going, she eats 'er own share and 'er little girl's as well, though the little girl is dellikit."

"She 'ad a little boy once," said Bert, "but she pushed 'im into the water when nobody wasn't looking."

"No, she didn't," said Emmeline, "she sent 'im away to be kep' by poor people, so 'er 'usbind wouldn't know where 'e was. They ill-treat 'im something cruel."

"Wot's 'er nime?" asked Bert, thinking that it was time that so interesting a personality should be labelled.

"'Er nime?" said Emmeline, thinking hard, "'e: nime's Morlvera." It was as near as she could get to the name of an adventuress who figured prominently in a cinema drama. There was silence for a moment while the possibilities of the name were turned over in the children's minds.

"Those clothes she's got on ain't paid for, and never won't be," said Emmeline; "she thinks she'll get the rich lord to pay for 'em, but 'e won't. 'E's given 'er jools, 'underds of pounds' worth."

"'E won't pay for the clothes," said Bert with conviction. Evidently there was some limit to the weak good nature of wealthy lords.

At that moment a motor carriage with liveried servants drew up at the emporium entrance; a large lady with a penetrating and rather hurried manner of talking, stepped out, followed slowly and sulkily by a small boy, who had a very black scowl on his face and a very white sailor suit over the rest of him. The lady was continuing an argument which had probably commenced in Portman Square.

"Now, Victor, you are to come in and buy a nice doll for your cousin Bertha. She gave you a beautiful box of soldiers on your birthday, and you must give her a present on hers."

"Bertha is a fat little fool," said Victor, in a voice that was as loud as his mother's and had more assurance in it.

"Victor, you are not to say such things. Bertha is not a fool, and she is not in the least fat. You are to come in and choose a doll for her."

The couple passed into the shop, out of view and hearing of the two back-street children.

"My, he is in a wicked temper," exclaimed Emmeline, but both she and Bert were inclined to side with him against the absent Bertha, who was doubtless as fat and foolish as he had described her to be.

"I want to see some dolls," said the mother of Victor to the nearest assistant; "it's for a little girl of eleven."



"A fit little girl of eleven," added Victor by way of supplementary information.

"Victor, if you say such rude things about your cousin, you shall go to bed the moment we get home, without having any tea."

"This is one of the newest things we have in dolls," said the assistant, removing a hobble-skirted figure in peach-coloured velvet from the window; "leopard-skin toque and stole, the latest fashion. You won't get anything newer than that anywhere. It's an exclusive design."

"Look!" whispered Emmeline outside; "they've bin and took Morlvera."

There was a mingling of excitement and a certain sense of bereavement in her mind; she would have liked to gaze at that embodiment of overdressed depravity for just a little longer.

"I 'spect she's going away in a kerridge to marry the rich lord," hazarded Bert.

"She's up to no good," said Emmeline vaguely.

Inside the shop the purchase of the doll had been decided on.

"It's a beautiful doll, and Bertha will be delighted with it," asserted the mother of Victor loudly.

"Oh, very well," said Victor sulkily; "you needn't have it stuck into a box and wait an hour while it's being done up into a parcel. I'll take it as it is, and we can go round to Manchester Square and give it to Bertha, and get the thing done with. That will save me the trouble of writing, 'For dear Bertha, with Victor's love,' on a bit of paper."

"Very well," said his mother, "we can go to Manchester Square on our way home. You must wish her many happy returns of tomorrow, and give her the doll."

"I won't let the little beast kiss me," stipulated Victor.

His mother said nothing; Victor had not been half as troublesome as she had anticipated. When he chose he could really be dreadfully naughty.

Emmeline and Bert were just moving away from the window when Morlvera made her exit from the shop, very carefully held in Victor's arms. A look of sinister triumph seemed to glow in her hard, inquisitorial face. As for Victor, a certain scornful serenity had replaced the earlier scowls; he had evidently accepted defeat with a contemptuous good grace.

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The tall lady gave a direction to the footman and settled herself in the carriage. The little figure in the white sailor suit clambered in beside her, still carefully holding the elegantly garbed doll.

The car had to be backed a few yards in the process of turning. Very stealthily, very gently, very mercilessly Victor sent Morlvera flying over his shoulder, so that she fell into the road just behind the retrogressing wheel. With a soft, pleasant-sounding scrunch the car went over the prostrate form, then it moved forward again with another scrunch. The carriage moved off and left Bert and Emmeline gazing in scared delight at a sorry mess of petrol-smeared velvet, sawdust, and leopard skin, which was all that remained of the hateful Morlvera. They gave a shrill cheer, and then raced away shuddering from the scene of so much rapidly enacted tragedy.

Later that afternoon, when they were engaged in the pursuit of minnows by the waterside in St. James's Park, Emmeline said in a solemn undertone to Bert—

"I've bin finking. Do you know oo 'e was? 'E was 'er little boy wot she'd sent away to live wiv poor folks. 'E come back and done that."

## EXILE'S LETTER

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EZRA POUND

BORN: Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885.

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*From the Chinese of Rihaku (Li Po), usually considered the greatest poet of China: written by him while in exile about A. D. 760 to the Hereditary War-Councillor of Sho, "recollecting former companionship."*

So Kin of Rakuho, ancient friend, I now remember  
That you built me a special tavern,  
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.  
With yellow gold and white jewels  
                    we paid for the songs and laughter,  
And we were drunk for month after month,  
                    forgetting the kings and princes.  
Intelligent men came drifting in, from the sea  
                    and from the west border,  
And with them, and with you especially  
                    there was nothing at cross-purposes;  
And they made nothing of sea-crossing  
                    or of mountain-crossing  
If only they could be of that fellowship.  
And we all spoke out our hearts and minds . . .  
                    and without regret.  
And then I was sent off to South Wei,  
                    smothered in laurel groves,  
And you to the north of Raku-hoku,

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The "translation" which follows was published in *Poetry*, March, 1915.

Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories between us.  
And when separation had come to its worst  
We met, and travelled together into Sen-Go  
Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning and twisting waters;  
Into a valley of a thousand bright flowers . . .

  that was the first valley,  
And on into ten thousand valleys  
  full of voices and pine-winds.

With silver harness and reins of gold,  
  prostrating themselves on the ground,  
Out came the East-of-Kan foreman and his company;  
And there came also the "True-man" of Shi-you to meet me,  
Playing on a jewelled mouth-organ.

In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us  
  more Sennin music;

Many instruments, like the sound of young phoenix broods.

And the foreman of Kan-Chu, drunk,

Danced because his long sleeves

Wouldn't keep still, with that music playing.

And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my head on his lap,

And my spirit so high that it was all over the heavens.

And before the end of the day we were scattered like stars or rain.

I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,

You back to your river-bridge.

And your father, who was brave as a leopard,

Was governor in Hei Shu and put down the barbarian rabble.

And one May he had you send for me, despite the long distance;

And what with broken wheels and so on, I won't say it wasn't hard  
going . . .

Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.

And I was still going, late in the year,

  in the cutting wind from the north,

And thinking how little you cared for the cost . . .

  and you caring enough to pay it.

Then what a reception!

Red jade cups, food well set, on a blue jewelled table;

And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning;

And you would walk out with me to the western corner of the castle.

To the dynastic temple, with the water about it clear as blue jade,  
With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and drums,  
With ripples like dragon-scales going grass-green on the water.  
Pleasure lasting, with courtezans going and coming without hin-  
drance.

With the willow-flakes falling like snow,  
And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,  
And the waters a hundred feet deep reflecting green eyebrows—  
Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young moonlight,  
Gracefully painted—and the girls singing back at each other,  
Dancing in transparent brocade,  
And the wind lifting the song, and interrupting it,  
Tossing it up under the clouds.

And all this comes to an end,  
And is not again to be met with.  
I went up to the court for examination,  
Tried Layu's luck, offered the Choyu song,  
And got no promotion,  
And went back to the East Mountains white-headed.

And once again we met, later, at the South Bridge head.  
And then the crowd broke up—you went north to San palace.  
And if you ask how I regret that parting?  
It is like the flowers falling at spring's end,  
                    confused, whirled in a tangle.  
What is the use of talking! And there is no end of talking—  
There is no end of things in the heart.

I call in the boy,  
Have him sit on his knees to write and seal this,  
And I send it a thousand miles, thinking.

Rihaku (Li Po)

Translated by Ezra Pound from the notes of the late Ernest Fenollosa, and the decipherings of the Professors Mori and Araga.

# THE METAMORPHOSIS

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AGNOLO FIRENZUOLA

BORN: Florence, September 28, 1493. DIED: Prato?, about 1545.

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THERE WAS at Tivoli, an ancient city of the Latins, a gentleman called Cecc' Antonio Fornari, who had the idea of taking a wife at an age when other men have a thousand griefs from theis, and, as it is the case with old men, he would not take one unless she was young and good-looking; he lit on the right thing. One of the Coronati, named Giusto, a man of some note into the bargain, seeing himself overstocked with a lot of daughters and in order not to be obliged to hand out a large dowry, gave him one of them, a pretty and comely lass. She, on seeing herself tied up to an old fellow fallen back into childhood, and henceforth deprived of those pleasures on account of which she wished for so long a time to abandon her home, her father's love and mother's carresses, became very angry about it; she grew at length so disgusted at the spitting, wheezing and the other trophies of her husband's old age, that she thought of making herself amends and got it into her head to take, should the occasion however present itself, somebody who could supply the wants of her youth better than her father himself had known how to do: Fortune was far more propitious to her schemes than she would have dared to hope for. In fact, a young Roman, called Fulvio Macaro, having repaired to Tivoli with one of his friends, named Menico Coscia, by way of amusement, and having frequently a glimpse of the young woman who appeared to him pretty, as indeed she was so, fell ardently in love with her and entrusting this Menico with the secret

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First published in the original Tuscan, in *Ragionamenti amorosi*, which was translated into English 1889.

of his love, commended himself to him for the best. Menico, who was a man to get his hands safely out of any scrape, told him, without tiring him by a flood of words, to be of good hope and that if he was resolved on following out his idea in everything, he well knew how to settle matters in a way that he should be as often as he liked with the young woman. You imagine whether Fulvio, who had no other desire, told him thereupon to call again to-morrow; he forthwith cried out that he was prepared for every event, provided his friend helped his suffering.—“I have been told,” Menico then continued, “that the lady’s husband is on the look out for a slip of a girl of fourteen or fifteen years old for the house-service, and get her married at the end of a few years, as this custom still flourishes in Rome. I have determined that it shall be you who will go to him, to remain there as long as you please, but listen a while how. Our neighbour, that man from Tagliacozzo, who comes sometimes to our place to do one thing or another, is, as you are aware, a great friend of mine. While talking yesterday morning, he told me I know not about what subject that the old fellow had charged him to procure him one, and to do this he was about returning home in a few days to see if there is not somebody to bring him. He is poor and willingly offers his services to the wealthy; I doubt not but that by the aid of a little drink-money which could be given him, he would be ready to do whatever we wish. He can then pretend that he is gone to Tagliacozzo and is to return thence in a fortnight or twenty days; he will dress you up like one of those village girls and passing you off for one of his relations, will place you in your lady’s mansion. When there, if the courage fails you to put the rest into execution, you will have only yourself to blame. What will aid you in all this is the whiteness of your skin, without having to wear a beard for the next ten years, and as you have a woman’s face, so much so that for most part of the time they take you, as you know, for a woman dressed up in man’s clothes. Besides, as your nurse belonged to there, I think you can speak pretty much like those country people.” The poor lover agreed to all this, and it seemed to him a thousand years until the scheme should be put into execution; it already appeared to him that he was with her helping her to do the housewifery, and such is the

power of the imagination that he contented himself with what he was to be, absolutely the same as if it were really so.

They were off, without wasting a moment, to look for the countryman, who was very glad of the commission, and they settled beforehand everything that was to be done. Not to spin out the recital too long, Fulvio was, before a month had passed, already in his lady's mansion, in the quality of housemaid, and he waited on her so diligently that in a short time not only Lavinia (such was this youngster's name), but the whole house had the warmest friendship for him. While Lucia (thus the new servant had herself called), remaining in this position, was waiting for an opportunity of being servicable to her otherwise than in making the bed, it happened that Cecc' Antonio went to pass a few days in Rome, and Lavinia, seeing herself left alone, had the whim of taking Lucia to sleep with her. On the first night, after they had got under the blankets, and that, to one of them all mirthful at the unexpected windfall, it seemed a thousand years until the other fell asleep, to gather while she slept the fruit of her turmoils, the other thinking perhaps of some dashing young blade, began to embrace and kiss her most affectionately, and, as that may turn out, her hand just strayed finding she was not a woman like herself, she greatly wondered and withdrew to herself, not less astounded than she would have been if she had felt all of a sudden a serpent under a bunch of grass. Lucia waited, without daring to say or do anything, the issue of the scheme, and Lavinia, doubting that this was the servant, set to stare, as one aghast; yet, seeing that it was indeed Lucia, but not venturing to speak to her, she had the thought again on the object of her astonishment, found it as at first and remained at bay not knowing whether she was asleep or awake. Then thinking that perhaps her touch might be deceiving her, wishing to assure herself of the whole fact with her own eyes: she not only beheld with her eyes what she had touched with her hands, but discovered a heap of snow, having the form of a man and the tint of fresh roses; so that she was compelled to give herself up to a like wonder and to believe that so great a change was miraculously wrought, that she might safely taste the sweetness of love during the years of her youth. Being quite encouraged, she turned towards Lucia and



said: "Oh! what do I see this night, with my eyes? I know right well that you were just now a girl, and lo you are at present become a boy! How is that? I fear I see double or that you are some bewitched evil spirit come beside me tonight instead of Lucia, to make me fall into wicked temptations. Indeed and indeed I must see what that affair is." While speaking thus, she began to excite her with those provocations which frolicsome young girls willingly make use of on young brats formed before their age. She assured herself at this game that it was not a bewitched spirit, that she had not the double view at all, and she had the comfort thereof that you yourself may imagine. But do not think that she considered herself as out of doubt the first time, or even the third; I can assure you that if she had not feared for the changing of the real Lucia into a ghost, she would have believed herself quite certain of the fact only at the sixth. When she had arrived in passing to a conversation, she besought her by touching words to say how it had taken place; so Lucia, recalling the events since the first day of her love for her down to the present moment, related the whole story to her. She was exceedingly glad to see herself loved by so pretty a youth and how he had exposed himself to so many turmoils and perils for her. Passing from this account to other moving discourses, and perhaps still wishing to come to a certainty they tarried so long about getting up that the sun was already peeping in through the window slits; the moment for doing so seemed to them arrived, and after having decided that Lucia should remain a girl during the daytime before everybody, and become a boy at night or whenever they would find the means of being alone, they left the room all joyful.

This happy accord lasted a long while; months passed without anyone in the house becoming aware of anything, and it would have continued so for years, had not Cecc' Antonio, although he was as I have said altogether beyond the age and he could hardly convey the corn to the mill once a month, on seeing Lucia skipping through the house and considering her pretty good-looking, bethought himself of wishing a sievefull into her press and teased her several times by his importunities. Lucia, fearing lest some scandal might result from it one fine day, besought Lavinia for

God's sake to rid herself of such an annoyance. I have no need to tell you whether she hummed a blindman's litany the first time she had an interview with her husband; all I can certify is that she styled him something less than lord. "Look at," she cried out, "look at that bold foot soldier who wants to go through his drills like a cavalier! Well! what the deuce would you do then, if you were young and jolly? You who have now to occupy yourself no longer except with the graveyard and expect every moment the final decree, you want to give me a pretty gash in the face? Leave then, you old fool, leave then sin as it has left you. Do you not know that even were you steel, you would not be capable of forming the top of a needle of Damas? Oh! it would do you great honor when you would have reduced this poor girl, who is as good as bread, to what I will not name. That will be her dowry, that will serve her for a husband! oh! the great joy her father and mother will be in over it! How all her relations will be merry, when they discover that they have confided their ewe to the care of wolves! Tell me briefly, nasty man, if the like was done on yourself, what would you think about it? What! have you not set all Paradise in a hubbub these latter days because they gave me a serenade? But do you know what I have to tell you? If you do not conduct yourself otherwise, you will make me think of certain things which I never dreamt up to the present; oh! yes, oh! yes; you shall have enough to make you merry some fine day. Wait a bit, you shall see; I shall put in your way what you are looking for, and since I understand that conducting myself well it succeeds but ill with me, I shall now try if conducting myself badly does not succeed better. In fine, whoever will have fair weather in this low deceitful world, has only to do evil." As she accompanied these last words with four wicked little tears forcibly shed, she affected the jolly old fellow so well, that he begged her pardon and promised her never to rebuke her again in the world. But his promises were of little value, and if the tears were feigned, as well as the end of the imprecations, so was the relenting which they had provoked.

In a few days hence, Lavinia having repaired to a wedding party which the people of Tabaldo were celebrating, and having left behind at the house Lucia who felt somewhat indisposed, the

enterprising good fellow found her asleep I know not in what part of the mansion. She could perceive nothing: he took occasion thereby lifting it up to indulge in his little pleasure, he lighted upon what he was little expecting. Bewildered with wonder, he stood for some time like a lifeless thing; then revolving a thousand bad thoughts in his head, began to ask himself in a most brisk tone what that meant. Lucia, although her threats and incoherent words had given him at first a great mind to be afraid, had nevertheless her excuse quite ready, for she had since a long time conferred thereupon with Lavinia, in the case such a thing should crop up, and knowing that he was a jolly old fellow to believe a fib just as well as a truth; that he was not so terribly in reality as he appeared in words; she did not in the least trouble herself, pretended to be shedding hot tears and implored him to hear her reasons. After he had by the aid of a few more kind words encouraged her, she began, with a quivering voice and her eyes riveted on the ground, to say: "Know, my dear lord, that when I came into this house (cursed be the hour I put my foot here, since so silly an adventure was to befall me in it!) I was not what I am now. Three months ago (my God, sad life is mine!) that there came to me; one day as I was washing with lye, I felt a heavy weariness creep over me, and it began to grow, so small, so small, then it gradually commenced increasing so thoroughly that it has arrived at the degree you see, and if I had not seen those days one of your nephews, the tallest of them, I should have thought it was some evil swelling; for it sometimes gives me so much trouble that I should prefer to have I know not what. I am so ashamed of it, yes, indeed, I am so ashamed of it, that I have never dared open my mouth about it to anybody. Thus, since there is on my part neither fault nor sin, I beseech you for God's sake and our Good Lady of Olive, to have pity on me; I promise you that I should rather die than people should learn so shameful a thing about a poor girl as I am."

The dear old man, who was completely out of his latitude, seeing the tears raining from her four by four and hearing her uttering her reasons so nicely, began almost to believe that she was speaking truly. Nevertheless, as that seemed to him too much of a good thing and the caresses which Lavinia was accustomed to

lavish on her rushed back into his head, he suspected some underhand work and asked himself if Lavinia had not, after finding the thing out, taken advantage of the windfall under his nose; he then interrogated Lucia more explicitly and asked her whether her mistress had had any knowledge about it.—“The Lord preserve me!” she replied boldly, seeing that henceforth the matter was in a fair way of doing; “I have been always on my guard against it as of an unlucky adventure; I told you and repeated it to you, I would rather die than anyone in the world should know it. If God cures me of that evil, no man living, except yourself, shall know it; and may God grant, since he brought this infirmity on me, that I may become again such as formerly! To tell you the truth, I am so grieved about it that I am sure to die soon; for besides the shame it will cause me every time I see you, while thinking that you know my story, it seems to me I am the most encumbered creature in the world.”

“Come, my child,” replies old greybeard quite affected, “remain so, without mentioning a word about it to anyone; perhaps we may find some medicine to cure you; leave it to me, but especially do not hint a word about it to Madam.”

Thus, without pronouncing another syllable, his head quite confused, he left her and went off to the Doctor of the locality, whom they called Master Consolo, and I know not to how many other persons, to inquire about the accident. In the meanwhile, the wedding was over, Lavinia returned home, and when she had learned from Lucia what had happened, I leave you to think whether she was displeased at it; I reckon it was a still sadder news for her than when she knew she had so old a husband. Cecc’ Antonio, who had gone, as I have just stated, to inquire about the malady, having heard so much about it now in one way, now in another, returned home more perplexed than ever. Without saying a word to anybody that night, he resolved to set out for Rome the next morning, in search of some learned man who knew better how to expound the enigma to him; as soon as the day dawned, he saddled his horse and proceeded on his way to Rome. Having alighted at one of his friend’s house, and after taking a slight luncheon, he repaired to the University, thinking to find there better than elsewhere somebody who knew how to

remove this flea out of his ear; and by happy chance fell precisely on that kind comrade who had got Lucia placed at his house; the young man came sometimes into these quarters for pastime. The old man, on seeing him well dressed and saluted by a crowd of people, thought that he must be some great scholar, led him aside, and, under an oath of secrecy, entrusted him with his torment. Menico, who thoroughly knew the fine old fellow and who doubted at once about the affair said to himself while laughing aside: "You have put up at the right inn," and after a long conversation, he gave him to understand once for all that the thing was not only possible, but that it had already happened several times. In order the more easily to gain his belief, he led him into a bookseller's shop, named Jacopo di Giunta, and calling for a Pliny in Italian, showed him what this author says about a similar case, Book VII, chapter iv; he then showed him what Battista Fulgoso writes of it in his chapter *On Miracles*, and in this way he tranquilized the anxious old man's conscience so well, that all the people in the world might come to him; nobody could have made him believe that it could be otherwise. Once Menico was convinced that the thing had thoroughly entered his brains, and that it was not likely to leave it, he began another anthem and set to persuade him to not send away Lucia from his house; it was, said he, a good omen for a place, when such accidents came unexpectedly: there was never anything but boys, and a thousand other ridiculous stories. He then begged him so strictly, if ever he had any doubt to clear up, to apply always to him, that he would undertake it most willingly; and he knew so well how to give him reasons, that the good old man would not have parted with them for money. After having thanked this learned man and offered him all his fortune, Cecc' Antonio took his leave of him; the day seemed to him to last a thousand years until he got back to Tivoli to see if he could create an heir. As soon as he arrived he tried at it with all his might that very evening, in order not to make a liar of the omen, and Lavinia helped him valiantly. She grew bulky and was brought to bed of a boy, which caused that Lucia remained at the house as long as she had pleasure, without the old fellow perceiving or wishing to perceive anything.

## PROLOGUE TO BOOK FOUR

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FRANCOIS RABELAIS

BORN. (Probably near Chinon), la Deviniere, 1495.

DIED. Paris, *ae* 58, (probably) April 9, 1553

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GOOD PEOPLE. God save and keep you! Where are you? I can't see you: stay—I'll saddle my nose with spectacles—oh, oh! 'twill be fair anon, I see you. Well, you have had a good vintage, they say: this is no bad news to Frank, you may swear. You have got an infallible cure against thirst: rarely performed of you, my friends! You, your wives, children, friends, and families are in as good case as hearts can wish; 'tis well, 'tis as I'd have it: God be praised for it, and if such be his will, may you long be so. For my part, I am thereabouts, thanks to his blessed goodness; and by the means of a little pantagruelism (which you know is a certain jollity of mind, pickled in the scorn of fortune) you see me now hale and cheery, as sound as a bell, and ready to drink, if you will. Would you know why I'm thus, good people? I'll e'en give you a positive answer—Such is the Lord's will, which I obey and revere; it being said in his word, in great derision to the physician, neglectful of his own health, "Physician, heal thyself."

Galen had some knowledge of the bible, and had conversed with the christians of his time, as appears *lib. 11. de usu partium: lib. 2. de differentiis pulsuum, cap. 3. and ibid. lib. 3. cap. 2. and lib. de rerum affectibus* (if it be Galen's) Yet 'twas not for any such veneration of holy-writ that he took care of his own health. No,

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*Prologue to Book Four of Gargantua and Pantagruel. Written in 1551, probably, and first published in 1552. This is, of course, the Urquhart-le Motteux translation.*

'twas for fear of being twitted with the saying so well known among physicians.

“*Ἰατρὸς ἄλλων, αὐτὸς ἔλκεσι βεβύων.*”

“He boasts of healing poor and rich,  
Yet is himself all over itch.”

This made him boldly say, that he did not desire to be esteemed a physician, if from his twenty-eighth year to his old age he had not lived in perfect health, except some ephemeral fevers, of which he soon rid himself: yet he was not naturally of the soundest temper, his stomach being evidently bad. Indeed, as he saith, lib. 5. de sanitate tuenda, that physician will hardly be thought very careful of the health of others, who neglects his own. Asclepiades boasted yet more than this: for he said that he had articed with fortune not to be reputed a physician, if he could be said to have been sick, since he began to practise physic, to his latter age, which he reached, lusty in all his members, and victorious over fortune; till at last the old gentleman unluckily tumbled down from the top of a certain ill-propt and rotten staircase, and so there was an end of him.

If by some disaster health is fled from your worships to the right or to the left, above or below, before or behind, within or without, far or near, on this side or t'other side, wheresoever it be, may you presently, with the help of the Lord, meet with it. Having found it, may you immediately claim it, seize it, and secure it. The law allows it: the king would have it so: nay, you have my advice for it. Neither more nor less than the law-makers of old did fully empower a master to claim and seize his run-a-way servant, wherever he might be found. Ods-bodikins, is it not written and warranted by the ancient customs of this so noble, so rich, so flourishing realm of France, that the dead seizes the quick? See what has been declared very lately in that point by that learned, wise, courteous, humane, and just civilian, Andrew Tiraqueau, counsellor of the great, victorious, and triumphant Henry II. in the most honourable court of parliament at Paris. Health is our life, as Ariphron the Sicyonian wisely has it: without health, life is no life, 'tis not living life: 'ΑΒΙ'ΟΣ ΒΙ'ΟΣ, ΒΙ'ΟΣ

ABI'ΩΤΟΣ. Without health life is only a languishment, and an image of death. Therefore, you that want your health, that is to say, *that are dead, seize the quick; secure life to yourselves, that is to say, health.*

I have this hope in the Lord, that he will hear our supplications, considering with what faith and zeal we pray, and that he will grant this our wish, because 'tis moderate and mean. Mediocrity was held by the ancient sages to be golden, that is to say, precious, praised by all men, and pleasing in all places. Read the sacred bible, you'll find the prayers of those who asked moderately were never unanswered. For example, little dapper Zaccheus, whose body and reliques the monks of St. Garlick near Orleans boast of having, and nick-named him St. Sylvanus; he only wished to see our blessed Saviour near Jerusalem. 'Twas but a small request, and no more than anybody then might pretend to. But alas! he was but low built; and one of so diminutive a size, among the crowd, could not so much as get a glimpse of him. Well then he struts, stands on tip-toes, bustles and bestirs his stumps, shoves and makes way, and with much ado clambers up a sycamore. Upon this, the Lord, who knew his sincere affection, presented himself to his sight, and was not only seen by him, but heard also: nay, what's more, he came to his house, and blessed his family.

One of the sons of the prophets in Israel felling wood near the river Jordan, his hatchet forsook the helve, and fell to the bottom of the river: so he prayed to have it again ('twas but a small request, mark ye me) and having a strong faith, he did not throw the hatchet after the helve, as some spirits of contradiction say by way of scandalous blunder, but the helve after the hatchet, as you all properly have it. Presently two great miracles were seen: up springs the hatchet from the bottom of the water, and fixes itself to its old acquaintance the helve. Now had he wished to coach it to heaven in a fiery chariot like Elias, to multiply in seed like Abraham, be as rich as Job, strong as Sampson, and beautiful as Absalom, would he have obtained it, d'ye think? I'troth, my friends, I question it very much.

Now I talk of moderate wishes in point of hatchet (but harkee me, be sure you don't forget when we ought to drink) I'll tell you what is written among the apologues of wise Æsop the Frenchman,



I mean the Phrygian and Trojan, as Max. Planudes makes him; from which people, according to the most faithful chroniclers, the noble French are descended. Ælian writes that he was of Thrace; and Agathias, after Herodotus, that he was of Samos: 'tis all one to Frank.

In his time lived a poor honest country fellow of Giavot, Tom Wellhung by name, a wood-cleaver by trade, who in that low drudgery made shift so to pick up a sorry livelihood. It happened that he lost his hatchet. Now tell me who ever had more cause to be vexed than poor Tom? Alas, his whole estate and life depended on his hatchet: by his hatchet he earned many a fair penny of the best wood-mongers or log merchants, among whom he went a jobbing: for want of his hatchet he was like to starve; and had death but met him six days after without a hatchet, the guim fiend would have mowed him down in the twinkling of a bed-staff. In this sad case he began to be in a heavy taking, and called upon Jupiter with the most eloquent prayers (for you know, necessity was the mother of eloquence). With the whites of his eyes turned up towards heaven, down on his marrow-bones, his arms reared high, his fingers stretched wide, and his head bare, the poor wretch without ceasing was roaring out, by way of litany, at every repetition of his supplications, "My hatchet, lord Jupiter, my hatchet! my hatchet! only my hatchet, O Jupiter, or money to buy another, and nothing else! alas, my poor hatchet!"

Jupiter happened then to be holding a grand council about certain urgent affairs, and old gammer Cybele was just giving her opinion, or, if you had rather have it so, it was young Phoebus, the beau; but in short, Tom's outcries and lamentations were so loud, that they were heard with no small amazement at the council-board, by the whole consistory of the gods. "What a devil have we below," quoth Jupiter, "that howls so horridly? By the mud of Styx, have not we had all along, and have not we here still enough to do, to set to rights a world of damned puzzling businesses of consequence? We made an end of the fray between Presthan, king of Persia, and Soliman, the Turkish emperor: we have stopp'd up the passages between the Tartars and the Muscovites; answered the Xeriff's petition; done the same to that of Golgots Rays; the state of Parma's dispatched; so is that of

Maydemburg, that of Mirandola, and that of Aftica, that town on the Mediterranean which we call Aphrodisium: Tripoli by carelessness has got a new master; her hour was come.

"Here are the Gascons cursing and damning, demanding the restitution of their bells.

"In yonder corner are the Saxons, Easterlings, Ostrogoths, and Germans, nations formerly invincible, but now abetkoids, bridled, curbed, and brought under by a paulty diminutive crippled fellow: they ask us revenge, relief, restitution of their former good sense and ancient liberty.

"But what shall we do with this same Ramus and this Galland, with a pox to 'em, who, surrounded with a swarm of their scullions, blackguard ragamuffins, sizcis, vouchers and stipulators, set together by the ears the whole university of Paris? I am in a sad quandary about it, and for the heart's blood of me cannot tell yet with whom of the two to side.

"Both seem to me notable fellows, and as true cods as ever pissed. The one has rose-nobles, I say fine and weighty ones; the other would gladly have some too. The one knows something; the other's no dunce. The one loves the better sort of men: the other's beloved by them. The one is an old cunning fox; the other, with tongue and pen, tooth and nail, falls foul on the ancient orators and philosophers, and barks at them like a cur.

"What thinkest thou of it, say, thou bawdy Priapus? I have found thy council just before now, *et habet tua mentula mentem*."

"King Jupiter" (answered Priapus, standing up and taking off his cowl, his snout uncased and reared up, fiercely and stiffly propt), "since you compare the one to a yelping snarling cur, and the other to sly Reynard the fox, my advice is, with submission, that without fretting or puzzling your brains any farther about them, without any more ado, even serve them both as in the days of yore, you did the dog and the fox." "How?" asked Jupiter; "when? who were they? where was it?" "You have a rare memory, for ought I see!" returned Priapus. "This right worshipful father Bacchus, whom we have here nodding with his crimson phiz, to be revenged on the Thebans, had got a fairy fox, who, whatever mischief he did, was never to be caught or wronged by any beast that wore a head.

"The noble Vulcan here present had framed a dog of Monesian brass, and with long puffing and blowing, put the spirits of life into him: he gave it you, you gave it your Miss Europa, Miss Europa gave it Minos, Minos gave it Procris, Procris gave it Cephalus. He was also of the fairy kind; so that, like the lawyers of our age, he was too hard for all other sorts of creatures; nothing could scape the dog. Now who should happen to meet but these two? What do you think they did? Dog by his destiny was to take fox, and fox by his fate was not to be taken.

"The case was brought before your council: you protested that you would not act against the fates; and the fates were contradictory. In short, the end and result of the matter was, that to reconcile two contradictions was an impossibility in nature. The very pang put you into a sweat; some drops of which happening to light on the earth, produceth what the mortals call cabbage. All our noble consistory, for want of a categorical resolution, were seized with such a horrid thirst, that above seventy-eight hogsheads of nectar were swilled down at that sitting. At last you took my advice, and transmogrified them into stones; and immediately got rid of your perplexity, and a truce with thirst was proclaimed through this vast Olympus. This was the year of flabby cods, near Teumessus, between Thebes and Chalcis.

"After this manner, it is my opinion, that you should petrify this dog and this fox. The metamorphosis will not be incongruous: for they both bear the name of Peter. And because, according to the Limosin proverb, to make an oven's mouth there must be three stones, you may associate them with master Peter du Coignet, whom you formerly petrified for the same cause. Then those three dead pieces shall be put in an equilateral trigone, somewhere in the great temple at Paris; in the middle of the porch, if you will; there to perform the office of extinguishers, and with their noses put out the lighted candles, torches, tapers, and flambeaux; since, while they lived, they still lighted, ballock-like, the fire of faction, division, ballock sects, and wrangling among those idle bearded boys, the students. And this will be an everlasting monument to shew, that those puny self-conceited pedants, ballock-framers, were rather contemned than condemned by you. *Dixi, I have said my say.*"

"You deal too kindly by them," said Jupiter, "for ought I see,

monsieur Priapus. You don't use to be so kind to everybody, let me tell you: for as they seek to eternize their names, it would be much better for them to be thus changed into hard stones, than to return to earth and putrefaction. But now to other matters. Yonder behind us, towards the Tuscan sea, and the neighbourhood of Mount Appennin, do you see what tragedies are stined up by certain topping ecclesiastical bullies? This hot fit will last its time, like the Limosin's ovens, and then will be cooled, but not so fast.

"We shall have sport enough with it; but I foresee one inconveniency: for methinks we have but little store of thunder-ammunition, since the time that you, my fellow gods, for your pastime, lavished them away to bombard new Antioch, by my particular permission; as since, after your example, the stout champions, who had undertaken to hold the fortress of Dindenarois against all comers, fairly wasted their powder with shooting at sparrows; and then, not having wherewith to defend themselves in time of need, valiantly surrendered to the enemy, who were already packing up their awls, full of madness and despair, and thought on nothing but a shameful retreat. Take care this be remedied, son Vulcan; rouse up your drowsy Cyclops, Asteropes, Brontes, Arges, Polyphemus, Steropes, Pyracmon, and so forth; set them at work, and make them drink as they ought.

"Never spare liquor to such as are at hot work. Now let us dispatch this bawling fellow below. You, Mercury, go see who it is, and know what he wants." Mercury looked out at heaven's trap door, through which, as I am told, they hear what's said here below. By the way, one might well enough mistake it for the scuttle of a ship; though Icaromenippus said it was like the mouth of a well. The light-heeled deity saw that it was honest Tom, who asked for his lost hatchet; and accordingly he made his report to the synod. "Marry," said Jupiter, "we are finely helped up; as if we had now nothing else to do here but to restore lost hatchets. Well, he must have it then for all this, for so it is written in the book of fate (do you hear?), as well as if it was worth the whole duchy of Milan. The truth is, the fellow's hatchet is as much to him as a kingdom to a king. Come, come, let no more words be scattered about it, let him have his hatchet again.

"Now, let us make an end of the difference betwixt the levites

and molccatchers of Landerousse. Whereabouts were we?" Priapus was standing in the chimney-corner, and having heard what Mercury had reported, said in a most courteous and jovial manner: "King Jupiter, while by your order and particular favour, I was garden-keeper-general on earth, I observed that this word hatchet is equivocal to many things: for it signifies a certain instrument, by the means of which men fell and cleave timber. It also signifies (at least I am sure it did formerly) a female soundly and frequently thumpthumpriggleticketletwiddletobyed. Thus I perceived that every cock of the game used to call his doxy his hatchet; for with that same tool (this he said lugging out and exhibiting his nine inch knocker) they so strongly and resolutely shove and drive in their helvcs, that the females remain free from a fear epidemical amongst their sex—viz., that from the bottom of the male's belly the instrument should dangle at his heel for want of such feminine props. And I remember (for I have a member, and a memory too, ay, and a fine memory, large enough to fill a butter-firkin): I remember, I say, that one day of tubilustre [horn-fair] at the festivals of good-man Vulcan in May. I heard Josquin Des prez, Olkegan, Hobreths, Agricola, Brumel, Camelin, Vigoris, de la Fage, Bruyor, Prioris, Seguin, de la Rue, Midy, Moulu, Mouton, Gascoigne, Loiset, Compere, Penet, Fevin, Rousée. Richard Fort, Rousseau, Consilion, Constantio Festi, Jacquet Bercan, melodiously singing the following catch on a pleasant green:—

"Long John to bed went to his bride,  
And laid a mallet by his side:  
'What means this mallet, John,' saith she?  
'Why! 'Tis to wedge thee home,' quoth he.  
'Alas!' cry'd she, 'the man's a fool:  
What need you use a wooden tool?  
When lusty John does to me come,  
He never shoves but with his bum.'

"Nine olympiads, and an intercalary year after (I have a rare member, I would say memory; but I often make blunders in the symbolization and colligance of those two words) I heard Adrian Villard, Gombert, Janequin, Arcadet, Claudin, Certon, Manchi-court, Auxerre, Villiers, Sandrin, Sobier, Hesdin, Morales, Passe-

reau, Maille, Maillart, Jacotin, Hurteur, Verdelot, Carpentras, l'Heritier, Cadeac, Doublet, Vermont, Bouteiller, Loupi, Pagnier, Millet, du Moulin, Alaire, Maraut, Morpin, Gendie, and other merry lovers of music, in a private garden, under some fine shady trees, round about a bulwark of flaggons, gammons, pasties, with several coated quails, and laced mutton, waggishly singing:

“Since tools without their hafts are useless lumber,  
And hatchets without helves are of that number;  
That one may go in t’other, and may match it,  
I’ll be the helve, and thou shalt be the hatchet.

“Now would I know what kind of a hatchet this bawling Tom wants?” This threw all the venerable gods and goddesses into a fit of laughter, like any microcosm of flies; and even set limping Vulcan a hopping and jumping smoothly three or four times for the sake of his dear. “Come, come,” said Jupiter to Mercury, “run down immediately, and cast at the poor fellow’s feet three hatchets; his own, another of gold, and a third of massy silver, all of one size: then having left it to his will to take his choice, if he take his own, and be satisfied with it, give him the other two; if he take another, chop his head off with his own: and henceforth serve me all those losers of hatchets after that manner.” Having said this, Jupiter, with an awkward turn of his head, like a jackanapes swallowing of pills, made so dreadful a phiz, that all the vast Olympus quaked again. Heaven’s foot-messenger, thanks to his low-crowned narrow-brimmed hat, his plume of feathers, heel-pieces, and running stick with pigeon’s wings, flings himself out at heaven’s wicket, through the empty deserts of the air, and in a trice nimbly alights on the earth, and throws at friend Tom’s feet the three hatchets, saying unto him: “Thou hast bawled long enough to be a-dry: thy prayers and request are granted by Jupiter: see which of these three is thy hatchet, and take it away with thee.” Wellhung lifts up the golden hatchet, peeps upon it, and finds it very heavy: then staring on Mercury, cries, “Cods-zouks this is none of mine; I will not have it:” the same he did with the silver one, and said, “It is not this neither, you may even take them again.” At last, he takes up his own hatchet, examines the end of the helve, and finds his mark there: then, ravished with

joy, like a fox that meets some straggling poultry, and sneering from the tip of the nose, he cried, "By the mass, this is my hatchet, master god; if you will leave it me, I will sacrifice to you a very good and huge pot of milk, brim full, covered with fine strawberries, next ides of May."

"Honest fellow," said Mercury, "I leave it thee; take it; and because thou hast wished and chosen moderately, in point of hatchet, by Jupiter's command, I give thee these two others: thou hast now wherewith to make thyself rich: be honest." Honest Tom gave Mercury a whole cartload of thanks, and revered the most great Jupiter. His old hatchet he fastens close to his leathern girdle, and girds it above his breech like Martin of Cambray: the two others, being more heavy, he lays on his shoulder. Thus he plods on trudging over the fields keeping a good countenance amongst his neighbours and fellow-parishioners, with one merry saying or other after Patelin's way. The next day, having put on a clean white jacket, he takes on his back the two precious hatchets, and comes to Chinon, the famous city, noble city, ancient city, yea the first city in the world, according to the judgment and assertion of the most learned massoreths. At Chinon he turned his silver hatchet into fine testons, crown-pieces, and other white cash; his golden hatchet into fine angels, curious ducats, substantial ridders, spankers, and rose nobles: then with them purchases a good number of farms, barns, houses, out-houses, thatched-houses, stables, meadows, orchards, fields, vineyards, woods, arable lands, pastures, ponds, mills, gardens, nurseries, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, swine, hogs, asses, horses, hens, cocks, capons, chickens, geese, ganders, ducks, drakes, and a world of all other necessities, and in a short time became the richest man in the country, nay even richer than that limping scrape-good Maulevrier. His brother bumpkins, and the other yeoman and country-puts thereabouts, perceiving his good fortune were not a little amazed, insomuch that their former pity of Tom was soon changed into an envy of his so great and unexpected rise: and as they could not for their souls devise how this came about, they made it their business to pry up and down, and lay their heads together, to enquire, seek, and inform themselves by what means, in what place, on what day, what hour, how, why, and wherefore, he had come by this great treasure.

At last, hearing it was by losing his hatchet, "Ha, ha!" said they, "was there no more to do, but to lose a hatchet, to make us rich? Mum for that; it is as easy as pissing a bed, and will cost but little. Are then at this time the revolutions of the heavens, the constellations of the firmament, and aspects of the planets such, that whosoever shall lose a hatchet, shall immediately grow rich? Ha, ha, ha! by Jove, you shall even be lost, and it please you, my dear hatchet." With this they all fairly lost their hatchets out of hand. The devil of one that had a hatchet left: he was not his mother's son, that did not lose his hatchet. No more was wood felled or cleaved in that country, through want of hatchets. Nay, the *Æsopian* apologue even saith, that certain petty country gents, of the lower class, who had sold *Wellhung* their little mill and little field, to have wherewithal to make a figure at the next muster, having been told that this treasure was come to him by this only means, sold the only badge of their gentility, their swords, to purchase hatchets to go to lose them, as the silly clodpates did, in hopes to gain store of chink by that loss.

You would have truly sworn they had been a parcel of your petty spiritual usurers, Rome-bound, selling their all, and borrowing of others to buy store of mandates, a penny-worth of a new-made pope.

Now they cried out and brayed, and prayed and hawled, and invoked Jupiter: "My hatchet! my hatchet! Jupiter, my hatchet!" on this side, "My hatchet!" on that side, "My hatchet! ho, ho, ho, ho, Jupiter, my hatchet!" The air round about rung again with the cries and howlings of these rascally losers of hatchets.

Mercury was nimble in bringing them hatchets; to each offering that which he had lost, as also another of gold, and a third of silver.

Every he still was for that of gold, giving thanks in abundance to the great giver Jupiter: but in the very nick of time, that they bowed and stooped to take it from the ground, whip, in a trice, Mercury lopped off their heads, as Jupiter had commanded; and of heads, thus cut off, the number was just equal to that of the lost hatchets.

You see how it is now; you see how it goes with those, who in the simplicity of their hearts wish and desire with moderation. Take warning by this, all you greedy, fresh-water shirks, who



scorn to wish for anything under ten thousand pounds: and do not for the future run on impudently, as I have sometimes heard you wishing, "Would to God, I had now one hundred seventy-eight millions of gold! Oh! how I should tickle it off." The deuce on you, what more might a king, an emperor, or a pope wish for. For that reason, indeed, you see that after you have made such hopeful wishes, all the good that comes to you of it is the itch or the scab, and not a cross in your breeches to scare the devil that tempts you to make these wishes: no more than those two mumpers, wishers after the custom of Paris; one of whom only wished to have in good old gold as much as hath been spent, bought and sold in Paris, since its first foundations were laid, to this hour; all of it valued at the price, sale, and rate of the dearest year in all that space of time. Do you think the fellow was bashful? Had he eaten sour plums unpeeled? Were his teeth on edge, I pray you? The other wished our lady's church brim-full of steel needles, from the floor to the top of the roof, and to have as many ducats as might be crammed into as many bags as might be sewed with each and every one of these needles, till they were all either broke at the point or eye. This is to wish with a vengeance! What think you of it? What did they get by it, in your opinion? Why, at night both my gentlemen had kybed-heels, a tetter in the chin, a church-yard cough in the lungs, a catarrh in the throat, a swinging boil at the rump, and the devil of one musty crust of a brown george the poor dogs had to scour their grinders with. Wish therefore for mediocrity, and it shall be given unto you, and over and above yet; that is to say, provided you bestir yourselves manfully, and do your best in the meantime.

Ay, but, say you. God might as soon have given me seventy-eight thousand as the thirteenth part of one-half: for he is omnipotent, and a million of gold is no more to him than one farthing. Oh, oh! pray tell me who taught you to talk at this rate of the power and predestination of God, poor silly people? Peace, tush, st, st, st! fall down before his sacred face, and own the nothingness of your nothing.

Upon this, O ye that labour under the affliction of the gout. I ground my hopes; firmly believing, that if so it pleases the divine goodness, you shall obtain health; since you wish and ask fo

nothing else, at least for the present. Well, stay yet a little longer with half an ounce of patience.

The Genoese do not use, like you, to be satisfied with wishing health alone, when after they have all the live-long morning been in a brown-study, talked, pondered, ruminated, and resolved in the counting-houses, of whom and how they may squeeze the ready, and who by their craft must be hooked in, wheedled, bubbled, shaiped, over-reached and choused; and they go to the exchange, and greet one another with a *Sanità & guadagno*, messer; health and gain to you, sir. Health alone will not go down with the greedy curmudgeons: they over and above must wish for gain, with a pox to them; ay, and for the fine crowns or scudi di Guadagne: whence, heaven be praised, it happens many a time, that the silly wishers and woulders are balked, and get neither.

Now, my lads, as you hope for good health, cough once aloud with lungs of leather; take me off three swinging bumpers; prick up your ears; and you shall hear me tell wonders of the noble and good Pantagruel.

# THE HISTORY OF THE AMOURS OF EURIALUS AND LUCRETIA

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POPE PIUS II

("AENEAS SILVIUS" PICCOLOMINI)

BORN: Corsignano, *ca* 1404 or 1405. DIED: Ancona, August 14, 1464.

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COMPOSED AND WRITTEN in Latin in 1444, by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, promoted since to the papal chair, under the name of Pius II., printed in Italian at Vienna thirty-three years after it was first published, several times in Latin, in folio and in quarto, without date or name, and inserted in the complete collection of that Pope's works. This novel was translated into French verse, by Messire Antirus, chaplain of the holy chapel of the Dukes of Burgundy, Lions, 1500, in quarto; into French prose by Jean Millet, Paris, 1551, in octavo; into Spanish, Sevil, 1530; and lastly, once more into French prose by the Sieur de Louvencourt, Leyden, 1736, in twelves.\*

Aeneas-Sylvius wrote this novel fourteen years before his election, and ten years before he was created a cardinal. He was then secretary to the Emperor Frederick III. who first appointed him poet laureat, and afterwards sent him ambassador successively to the court of Rome, Milan, Naples, and Bohemia. Pope Nicholas V. promoted him to the bishoprick of Triesta, from whence he was translated to the See of Sienna, his country. He was employed as nuncio at different courts, created cardinal in 1456, elected pope in 1458, and died six years after, in the sixtieth of his age. He led a very regular and exemplary life after his promotion; but

\* In the French edition, the novel is entitled, *The Scienese, Lovers*; wherein the author proves, that married women make love better than maids or widows.

he had been very dissolute in his youth, and was then very far from being an enemy to gallantry. He altered his opinion when he was seated in the papal chair, and, pronouncing then *Ex Cathedra* with all the pride of pretended infallibility, he told the world, that the history of Eurialus and Lucretia was a moral tale; though he before had published it as a mere novel. It is said in the last editions of this work, in order to vindicate the new title, that it shews the fatal consequence of unwarrantable love.

The principal merit of this work is, that it will serve to give our readers a just idea of Italian manners and gallantry in the fifteenth century. They will see how very jealous Italian husbands were at that period, and how difficult it was to throw them off their guard. On the other hand it will appear, how well-disposed the good-natured dames were to help their lovers in so arduous a task. The former, indeed, are now much better civilized, and often will assist rather than thwart their wives' inclination, if, from what we daily see amongst us, we are to judge of what they are in their own country.

The edition we have now before us, is prefaced with two dedicatory epistles. The first to Gaspardo Schlick, chancellor of the Emperor Frederick III. contains several remarkable passages. The author, speaking of Marianus Socin, says, "That he was a very diminutive stature, as well as himself: Aeneas being of a Pygmean family, as his name seems to indicate. Piccolomini being derived from the two Italian words, *piccoli*, little, or short; and *uomini*, men. He is very lavish of his encomiums upon that celebrated jurisconsult, comparing him for philosophy, to Plato; for geometry, to Boetius; for music, to Pythagoras; for his skill in arithmetic, to Macrobius; for his knowledge in sculpture and painting, to Praxitelles and Appelles; adding, that he understood agriculture as well as Virgil; could wrestle with all the strength and dexterity of Enetellus; and, in fine, that Socin was as great a physician, as he was justly celebrated for his extensive knowledge in jurisprudence. Nevertheless, Piccolomini confesses, that philosophy and learning are not inseparable from stupidity. Then speaking to the merit of his own work, he owns, that it treats much of love and gallantry; which he acknowledges he was a great votary to in his youth; having been often in love, and very successful in

his amours at Sienna, his native city.—“And have you not been, says he to Schlick, my good lord chancellor, as great an admirer of the fair sex as any of your cotemporaries? I remember, that during the Emperor’s stay at Sienna, there was not a love affair in which your lordship did not act a capital part.”

The second Epistle is inscribed to his learned friend Marianus Socin, at whose solicitation the author says he wrote the love-romance of Eurialus and Lucretia; that this story brought to his memory the pleasing recollection of his own youthful adventures, at the same time that he congratulates himself of having escaped the dangers attending the life of a man of intrigue and gallantry. It may not be uninteresting, though foreign to our present extract, to add that this Marianus was grandfather to the celebrated Lelio Socin, the head of those sectaries, called after his name Socinians.

In the year 1434, the Emperor Sigismundus, of the House of Luxemburgh, came into Italy, and resolved to make some stay in the city of Sienna. He was received by the inhabitants with every mark of joy and respect. Each day was particularly distinguished by some magnificent entertainment, wherein the Emperor appeared always to the best advantage. Being tall, handsome, and as amorous as he was gallant, he was charmed with the beauty of the Sieneſe ladies, whom he pronounced the faireſt he ever ſaw. But the beauteous Lucretia, of the ancient family of the Camilli, and married to the ſenator Menelai, was the paragon of all her country-women. Here Aeneas Sylviuſ gives a moſt finiſhed deſcription of the heroine of his tale, and concludes by ſaying, that ſhe deſerved to be noticed by the Emperor, and fix the attention of the handsome Eurialus of Franconia, equerry to Sigismundus, and his favourite. He was to his ſex what Lucretia was to her’s, the very chef d’oeuvre of partial nature. His good mein, the magnificence of his equipages, the brilliant appearance of his numerous attendants, were as many ſnares to ſurpriſe the hearts of the ladies, by commanding their admiration. Add to this a flowery and fluent elocution, and every deſirable accompliſhment; and you will have a ſketch of the picture which the gallant Pope gives of Eurialus.

It was no wonder that these two miracles of beauty should be charmed with each other, and that, from their first meeting, Eurialus and Lucretia should feel the workings of a most irresistible passion, and give way to the voice of nature, who seemed to whisper to them, that her intention had been over-ruled, when Lucretia was contracted to any other man.

They had not yet enjoyed the opportunity of conversing together. Their eyes had been the only interpreters of their hearts. The Emperor, who had watched them more through friendship than curiosity, passing one day by the senator's house, took particular notice of Lucretia's returning from her window his equerry's glances, with a very intelligible blush. "Is it thus, says he to him, that you labour to estrange the affections of the married ladies of Sienna?" Eurialus, rather discomposed at so sudden a charge, endeavoured to dissemble with his master, by saying, "that chance alone had directed his eyes to Lucretia's balcony:" but the Emperor was not deceived by so lame an apology; yet rather than disconcert his favourite, or disturb his quiet, he kindly gave another turn to the conversation.

On the other hand, Lucretia was intent on the means of bringing matters to a speedy conclusion.—A confidant in a love intrigue is as necessary as a bribe in a bad cause. She had no women, whom she dared to entrust with the mighty secret. One of those domestic animals, whose principal merit is unlimited passiveness, a Swiss in short, seemed to her a fit person to answer her present purpose. She had one in her family of the name of Sosia, who appeared to her the more worthy of confidence, as he was less liable to those delicate feelings that might have operated strongly on a more animated being. She called him up to her, when the following dialogue took place.—"Well, my dear Sosia, what thinkest thou of the magnificent train of our sovereign?" "Why truly, your ladyship, these German folks are handsome, and well-proportioned fellows: La! it does my heart good when I think that I am half their countryman!"—"Aye, but didst thou take notice of that handsome equerry, who seems to be the Emperor's favourite? If I mistake not, his name is Eurialus."—"As to that matter, mistress, the lad is well enough; but his horse! Ah madam, that is the handsomest beast I ever saw. I wish I had such another;

the very first man in my country would honour me for his sake.”—  
“Poh, what signifies his horse? the man is the thing. Oh, my good Sosia, where can he be matched? how well calculated to charm the proudest of my sex, seduce her heart, and make her mad with desire!”—“Oh fie, your ladyship, you forget yourself; if you were now what you were about three years ago, I would say that you are in the right, and that a husband of lord Eurialus’s complexion is more the thing for you than my old master. But you are now married, and surely you would not think of bringing to disgrace so grave a senator as my lord Menelai.”—“Ah, Sosia, Sosia! thou knowest not the force of all-subduing love. It makes us rise superior to all prejudice, and silences both duty and decorum. Hear me, Sosia, and do thy mistress a piece of service, which will ever be gratefully acknowledged. Go to Eurialus, and give him to understand that a lady of the first beauty and fashion is a great admirer of his person and genteel carriage, and that she wishes . . . . .”  
“Not I truly, your ladyship, I shall do no such a thing. You quite mistake your man. If you mean to put some foul trick upon my good master, Sosia, though a menial servant, has too much honour to be the abettor and accomplice of your wickedness. All I can do is to give you my word that I shall not betray you to my lord the senator. The people of Switzerland are above doing dirty actions; but we are neither informers, talkative, nor mischievous.”—“Thou speakest well, Sosia, to be sure I should love no man but my husband. It is a breach of all laws of honour, of every thing that is held sacred amongst men. Yet, I blushing confess it, Eurialus has found his way to my heart, and all my efforts to drive away his lovely image are exerted in vain. Thus far am I criminal. If I live I may perhaps sink deeper in guilt. Death is the only resource left: I ought and will embrace it. Come, good Sosia, let me have thy friendly opinion on the best method of putting an end to my life. Shall I drown, stab, or poison myself? I shall abide by thy friendly advice.”—“Oh la, madam, I declare you quite frighten me. Your death would drive me to despair; especially if you were to chuse by my direction. Come what will, you must live. I had much rather help you to your spark, than to a bowl or dagger. Life, after all, is preferable to innocence without it. Come, be comforted, I shall wait on Lord Eurialus, and acquaint him with

his good fortune. If he takes my meaning, why then manage the rest yourself. If, on the contrary, he should disappoint you in your expectation, it will be no fault of mine."—"I ask no more, my trusty Sosia."

Though he promised fair, the honest Swiss put off the evil day as long as he could, and at last, meeting Eurialus in the streets, only said these few enigmatical words to him:—"My lord, you are much beloved by the fair in this noble city."—The equerry, who knew not Sosia for what he was, never heeded his address, and passed him as a meddling insignificant fellow. Had he known him to be servant to Lucretia, he would have seized the golden opportunity; for he was then wholly intent on the means of procuring an interview with his fair enamorata. He made, on his amour, several pertinent reflexions: these, his holiness gives us in very fluent Latin, which would lose much even by the most elegant translation. We shall only quote two instances which we do not remember to have met with in any other author. The first is, "That Virgil, drove to despair by the severity of a beautiful maid, hung himself." The other is almost too incredible to be related as true, by so learned a man as Piccolomini: it is, "That a woman, having laid a considerable wager that Aristotle, notwithstanding all his philosophy, could not be proof against the allurements of love; the poor degraded philosopher suffered himself to be mounted, bridled, and spurred like a hack, by the fair seducer."

Eurialus, after a long and serious meditation on the most expeditious manner of making his love known to Lucretia, resolved at last to write a letter, which, as he did it under Cupid's dictates, was couched in the most tender and insinuating language. His business was next to look out for somebody to carry his love epistle. He was told of a woman hackneyed in those ways, and who had the reputation of being seldom unsuccessful. To her Eurialus made application, and enforced his suit by a valuable present, with a promise of a greater reward, if she should succeed in her embassy. The good-natured woman went instantly to work, and by means of a well-timed bribe, and a plausible pretence, obtained a *tete-a-tete* with Lucretia; to whom, after a short and pithy introduction, she delivered the letter. The Senator's lady, as any other of her sex would have done, shewed an hypocritical resent-



ment, which her heart belied. "How dare you, said she, come to me with so impertinent a message? Is it befitting my virtue and high rank to hearken to the fancy language of any man, especially one whose very person I am a stranger to? (Here truth forced a blush from her.) Granted that he is all you say, a man of the first rank, no less amiable than rich; is that a reason for me to enter into a criminal connexion with him?—No, no! I know better my duty towards my noble lord and myself. It is lucky for you, woman, that I have too great a regard for my own reputation, to apprise my lord Menelai of your daring behaviour, a gloomy dungeon would be your portion. Go and acquaint your employer in what esteem I hold his impertinent letter." So saying, she tore it in five or six pieces, acting all the time, to a miracle, the enraged and affronted woman, and flung the paper not quite in the fire, but by the side of it. The old beldam, who had observed every action of our modern Lucretia, pretending to be more frightened than she really was, flung herself at the feet of the senator's chaste consort: and, in the accents of well-feigned repentance, exclaimed, "Oh, dear madam! pardon me. How very unfortunate I am to have deserved your anger! I protest to your ladyship, that my intention—" "No more, interrupted Lucretia; be gone, and let me never see your face again."

The old woman waited not for a second command, but instantly hied herself to Eurialus.—"All is as you could wish my lord, said she, your letter has met with a very bad reception; I saw her fair hands tear it, but no matter for that—I call it a good omen." The Emperor's favourite thought the woman beside her senses, and begged she would be clear, and not talk as she had done, in riddles. She then gave him an account of the whole transaction—"Once more, my lord, you are in the fairest way of succeeding with Lucretia. She sighed when I mentioned your name. The very thoughts of your being handsome, deeply crimsoned her cheek. She took your letter, and tore it in a seeming passion; but observe me well, in the hurry, instead of committing it to the flames, she threw it in a very safe corner of the fire-place; my life upon it, but she picks up every atom of it, and reads the contents. They will have the desired effect on her—take my word for it. She'll kiss an hundred times the precious scroll, when she is by herself; aye, and answer it too. To be sure, she has called me

out of my name, or so, but what of that? She neither beat me, nor ordered her servants to do it: besides, had I been kicked and bastinadoed to a mummy, I would still hold good my opinion, that your lordship's letter hath effectually done the business, and that you will bring the matter to a happy conclusion."

Thus said Venus's prophetess, and Eurialus soon experienced the truth of her oracle: but he did not think it prudent to mention it to the complaisant matron, lest she should grow too proud and talkative. Therefore, after having rewarded her in a princely manner, he dismissed her.

Lucretia had indeed answered his letter, and honest Sosia had been the bearer. Lest he should refuse the friendly office, his mistress, composing her countenance to affected serenity, said to him, "That young nobleman, of whom you have heard me talk in a manner unbecoming a woman of honour, not knowing the sentiments which I entertained for him, has written me a letter full of the expressions of the love I have inspired him with. Would you believe it, Sosia, this very letter has steeled my heart against him, and restored my troubled mind to peace and tranquillity. Yes, faithful Sosia, thy mistress is herself again. I had hitherto turned a deaf ear to the calls of virtue and duty; but nothing will henceforth make me swerve from them. This, Eurialus will see by the peremptory stile of my answer to him. Take it, and in delivering of it to him, do not fail to give him the strongest assurances of my indifference for him."

Sosia was enraptured, and muttered his thanks to heaven for so unexpected a conversion. The letter was as follows:

#### LUCRETIA TO EURIALUS.

"Give up a vain pursuit, and think of me no more. Honor and virtue forbid it. You may meet with more success with some other woman, better disposed than I am to hearken to the voice of seduction. Were my heart at my own disposal, you might perhaps—but what need I mention impossibilities. Believe me, if you love, sum up all your fortitude, and for ever renounce a passion which shall always be repaid with the coldest and most unconquerable indifference by

LUCRETIA."

Though this letter was far from being severe, yet it was couched in such terms, that the trusty Swiss thought it the most discouraging epistle a lover could receive from his mistress. He hastened with his message to Eurialus, who, judging better of Lucretia's real disposition, gave to Sosia the kindest reception, and then put into his hands a letter full of respect and submission, assuring Lucretia that his love was as refined and honourable, as its object was handsome and accomplished. He concluded by entreating her acceptance of a diamond ring, which he begged she would wear for his sake. It was of so immense a value, and the present he made to the Swiss so considerable, that neither the mistress nor her faithful messenger could find it in their hearts to refuse.

Eurialus had intimated in his letter, that he wished for an interview, in which he promised to behave with all possible respect and modesty. To this Lucretia sent for answer, that, trusting implicitly to his honour, she would readily consent, but that it was impracticable, as she was continually beset by her jealous and troublesome Argus, who watched her so carefully, that, unless Eurialus could fly in the air, and come in through the iron grates that blocked up her windows, it was impossible for them to meet. The young Lord was chagrined, but not discouraged by so many obstacles, and resolved to conquer them all. They kept up for some time this epistolary correspondence, till both, tired of so trifling an enjoyment, thought seriously on the means of giving each other verbal assurances of their mutual sentiments, and some more solid proof of their love. Meanwhile, Sosia's heart was considerably softened by the generosity of Eurialus, from whom he never returned empty handed, and, seeing that his mistress never sent back the present she received, he thought it right to follow so laudable an example.

Lucretia was permitted to visit no one but her own mother, the Lady Camilla. She had a lodger in her house, who could not withstand the golden arguments which the senator's lady made use of, to persuade her to lend her apartment on this occasion. Eurialus was informed of the place of rendezvous, and no doubt would have been made happy; had not fortune, who is not always an attendant on frolicksome Cupid, raised an obstacle which they

could neither foresee nor remove. Lucretia had taken, as she thought, the fairest opportunity. She went to her mother's at the time when she knew the good lady would be gone to church. But what was her disappointment, when she saw that Camilla had taken the whole family with her, and locked the street door? She was obliged to return home, sad and dejected; yet revolving in her mind some new plan that might better answer her purpose.

About this time Eurialus was dispatched to Rome upon some important business, and was to remain there near two months. This event proved very grievous to our lovers; and during his absence Lucretia shut herself up from the world, and even her dearest friends could get no access to the fair disconsolate. At last Eurialus returned, and new efforts were made to procure the wished-for interview. The Senator's house was parted by a narrow lane only from an inn, one of the windows of which faced that of Lucretia's dressing-room. Eurialus hired that apartment, which afforded him an opportunity of conversing with his enamored. But although this was better than corresponding by letters only; yet the very distance which the lane occasioned, though ever so small, was a very material obstacle to the full completion of their wishes. Their chief object was to find out some means of coming to a closer approach: Eurialus, observing that Lucretia's window was not barred like the rest, proposed to lay a plank across from his apartment to his mistress's dressing-room. Lucretia strongly objected to the danger of such an attempt, and had courage enough to oppose it. At last, the fear of being overheard, operated more strongly, as they observed several persons who seemed to listen from the adjacent rooms, and mistrusting the very inn-keeper, they were forced to have recourse to some other expedients.

The first that occurred to them was rather whimsical, and might have appeared degrading to any one but a lover, deaf to every consideration not suggested by his passion. Lucretia was informed, that her husband's tenants were to bring several sacks of wheat, the produce of the last crop; the carts were to be unloaded at a back door, and the sacks carried into the house by common porters. Honest Sosia, firmly believing that neither his mistress nor the young lord meant any harm, procured a porter's

dress for Eurialus; and, thus disguised our gallant went up to the garret with a load on his back, and by a private door stole into Lucretia's room. Their mutual joy at this first meeting beggars all description, and even Piccolomini's pencil draws but a faint sketch of so luxuriant a picture. Fortune however was still on the watch to disturb the loving pair; they had not been above an hour together, which, from the many things they had to say, seemed to them even shorter than the fleetest minute; when Sosia, puffing and panting for breath, came to tell them that the Senator, with another man, was just entering at the gate. "What shall I do?" exclaimed Eurialus: we readily suppose that this was the expression, not of his fear, but of the concern he had for Lucretia's reputation. "Let me alone, replied the lady, only hide yourself in that corner, and leave the rest to me." He had hardly time enough to obey her commands, when Menelai entered the apartment. He was come with the secretary to the council of state to search for some papers which were wanted on a very important occasion. Lucretia did not attempt to oppose their search, till the Senator called for a light, in order to visit the very closet where Eurialus was concealed. She thought it high time to step forth; and, coming up to her husband, "Do not give yourself any farther trouble, said she, I think I remember where you have laid those papers; if I mistake not, they are in that bandbox over the window; I shall reach it down:" so saying, she got on a chair, but in attempting to take the box, let it go, and the window being open, the whole fell into the street; then, with a well-dissembled concern—"O Lord! said she, Sir, I have done mischief indeed; behold all your papers scattered about the street; pray go and pick them up, lest somebody should seize upon them!" The Senator alarmed, as well as his secretary, hastened down stairs to prevent the precious manuscripts from falling into unhallowed hands. This gave an opportunity to the fair dame of dismissing Eurialus, after having bade him the most tender farewell.

A happy lover is seldom discreet—"This, says the holy priest, was the case with Eurialus." He told the whole story to a friend, who, in all likelihood was the Pope himself; for it seems that he was privy to the whole transaction.

An event took place about this time, which turned greatly to

the honour of Lucretia, and put her reputation for chastity upon a level with that of the Roman matron of that time. An Hungarian gentleman, of the name of Baccari, no less conspicuous for his figure and fortune, than universally admired for his wit and literary abilities, fell in love with the Senator's wife. After several unsuccessful attempts, he at last found means to convey to her a most superb nosegay; whose principal ornament was an artificial flower, which opened by means of an almost imperceptible spring, and contained a billet-doux. Lucretia soon discovered the contrivance, and perused the most passionate love-letter she had ever been complimented with: but her heart being sincerely attached to Eurialus alone, she spurned the offers of this new lover, and, as an instance of her conjugal fidelity, complained to her husband, and shewed him the letter. Menelai addressed himself to the Emperor, who sharply rebuked the audacious Baccari, and ordered him to leave Sienna immediately; bidding his courtiers to be warned by this example, and not to be daring enough to attempt any thing against the honour of the Sienese ladies. This charge he delivered with half a smile, knowing very well that Eurialus, his favourite, was equally guilty, but more mercifully used by Lucretia. The monarch's intention was by his apparent severity, to caution his equerry to be more upon his guard, and carry on his amours with becoming secrecy. This lesson was lost upon Eurialus, for, although he never was discovered, it happened more through good fortune than any particular care on his side. Various were the stratagems he had recourse to: sometimes disguised in the habit of a groom, at another, in the character of a waiter he got admittance into Menelai's house; and, as the visit was by no means intended for the latter, he readily found his way to the lady's apartment. One night as he was at supper, the Senator came in unexpectedly, and must have discovered Eurialus, had not Lucretia's wonted presence of mind, saved him and herself from that disgrace. She went out to meet her husband, who had already got as far as the landing-place, loaded him with the most tender reproaches for having left her to eat her supper by herself. In vain did he protest to her, that he had not eat a morsel the whole day, she was not to be pacified, and falling on the neck of Menelai, she bedewed the dear man with her tears. The Senator, pleased at so

rare an instance of her love, kissed off her tears, and comforted his loving spouse in the most soothing language. Lucretia acted the farce long enough to give Eurialus time to get out at the window; then walking into the room arm in arm with her caro sposo, they sat down lovingly to supper.

Sosia continued his faithful services to Eurialus and Lucretia, for the former's generosity had overcome all those nice scruples, which had at one time staggered the delicate feelings of our Swiss, who was not to be prevailed upon by mere reasoning. But the fellow's awkwardness, and now and then a qualm of conscience, occasioned by the part he was acting in this comedy, convinced our lovers that another confidant was necessary, lest Sosia's disorder should return upon him, and in a fit of delicacy he should disclose the whole affair to Menelai, or by his blundering betray them in the end. The care of providing a more useful hand was left to Eurialus. He singled out for that purpose a certain signor Pandali, who, though a relation of Menelai, seemed to the young lord a fit person to answer his purpose. He courted his acquaintance, and Pandali, who was devoured by the most boundless ambition, thought it a great honour to be seen in the company of a man who enjoyed all his Sovereign's favor, and who, by his interest at court, might be of great service. Eurialus, knowing the weak side of Pandali, offered him his protection, and to recommend him to the Emperor's notice. "I have it in my power," says the artful courtier, "to dispose in your favour of the highest preferments in the gift of Sigismondus. His majesty, at my recommendation, will readily admit you amongst the Knights of the Golden Spurs; but, as this dignity however honourable, would be confined to you alone, I think the title of Count is far preferable; as in this case your honours could be transferred to your posterity: but, as a friendly turn deserves another, you must do me a piece of service."—"Oh, any thing to be a Count of the Holy Empire! Speak, my good lord, and were it to renew the twelve labours of Hercules, I would undertake them all to convince you of my gratitude."—"The task," returned Eurialus, "is by no means so hard: it is only to give me your assistance in a little love intrigue, on the success of which depends all my happiness, and even my life. I shall be open and explicit with you, and let

this be the first proof of the confidence I repose in you. I have the most tender regard for Menelai's lady, and may without vanity flatter myself that she requites my love. The only favour I expect from you is to give us an opportunity of a speedy *tete-a-tete*."—"How, my Lord! have you forgot that Menelai is my friend and kinsman?" "Why! my dear Pandali, that is the very reason that has induced me to apply to you. Who could better serve me in this affair? You are every day with the Senator, he informs you of all his transactions, and, knowing when he is from home, and where he goes, you might acquaint me with the proper time to go and throw myself at Lucretia's feet without the danger of being interrupted by any jealous intruder."—"All you say, my Lord, is very true; yet give me leave to tell you, that though the title of Count is highly desirable, I do not think it worth the high price you put to it. The disgrace. . . ." "Pshaw, how you talk! Why, my good Pandali, various ways lead us to preferment and dignities. Look around you, and consider well by what means our nobles have obtained their titles. The most illustrious among them have acquired it by their warlike deeds; that is, in other words, by plunder, massacre, and murder. Others owe their present grandeur to the money hoarded up by their penurious and plebeian ancestors; but, believe me, the greatest number are indebted for theirs to that very sort of complaisance which I require from you. Services of this kind done to the Sovereign, or his favourites, are always rewarded with titles, or other eminent preferments."

Although the arguments of Eurialus were not unanswerable, yet they served to silence all objection on the part of Pandali. He promised every assistance in his power, and it was not long before he seized an opportunity of obliging his new patron. An affray had happened at a country-seat of Menelai between his servants and the cottagers, in which several of the former were killed on the spot. This circumstance obliged the Senator to leave town, in order to go and take the informations which the law required on such occasions. As a coach would have been troublesome, and occasion some delay on the road, he resolved to travel on horseback. Having no saddle-horse himself, he sent to several of his friends; but they were out of town: and Menelai complaining of his disappointment to Pandali, the latter engaged to supply him



instantly. He applied for that purpose to Eurialus, who called to a groom, and after giving him some private instructions, ordered him to saddle two of the fleetest horses in the Emperor's mews, one for Menclai, and the other for the groom himself. The Senator, proud of travelling with his Sovereign's servant behind him, set out directly in that brilliant equipage. A few hours were sufficient for him to reach his country seat, and restore peace and harmony amongst his tenants; having finished his business, he was preparing to return to town, when the groom who had his cue, told him that his imperial majesty's horses were not used to so much fatigue, as they never travelled above a short stage in a day: and that if the horses were to come by any accident, he would loose his place, nay, perhaps his life. The Senator, seeing that he must perforce stay there all night, sat down as contented as a jealous husband can be, at twenty miles distant from his slippery wife.

We need not question the reader's sagacity, so far as to suppose, that he wants to be told in what manner Eurialus and Lucretia spent their time. Suffice it to say, that they were as happy as love and opportunity could make them. But alas, their bliss was too excessive to last: and here the Pope, recollecting his dignity, is not sparing of moral reflexions, which, though enhanced by a very pleasing stile, are trite and common, and such as every one may have read a hundred times: we shall therefore lay them aside to hasten to the catastrophe.

The happiness of these lovers lasted as long as the Emperor's stay in Italy; for, although his majesty went to Rome in the interim to be crowned there, Eurialus never missed an opportunity of writing to Lucretia, or of coming incognito to Sienna, in order to comfort her more effectually. But at last the Emperor set out for Trentum, in his way to Bohemia and Hungaria. Thus divided from the only man she loved, Lucretia pined away. She was convinced that she now had to lament two irreparable losses, that of her honour, and that of the adored accomplice of her guilt. She fell into a total decay, which soon making the most alarming progress, brought her in a few months to her grave. She died, and her last speech stammered the dear name of Eurialus.

Let us turn from the sad object. Her fate is a further instance of the danger attending on the wretch, who, forgetful of the most

sacred duties, gives a loose to a guilty passion. Luckily however, the generality of the ladies do not take so much to heart the loss of a lover. And as for the other sex, Eurialus is a proof that men were even then easily comforted for the death of a mistress, falling a sacrifice to an excess of love; for the historian tells us, that Sigismondus gave to his favourite in marriage, a fair maid of the most illustrious birth, with whom Eurialus lived long and happy, perhaps without experiencing the fate of Menelai.

Such is the novel composed by Pius II. when he was only a bishop, and had not yet received the Cardinal's hat. His manner of writing in Latin, shews that he was a very excellent scholar, and will easily convince the reader, that Piccolomini had made his particular study of the works of Petronius, whose stile he has copied, as he has endeavoured to do that of Tacitus and Livy, in writing the history of Bohemia, and of Frederic III. his master. He imitated also the manner of Cicero, in an harangue addressed to the Christian Princes, when he tried to make them take up arms against the Turks. His intention was to have headed the army in person, but death prevented him.

Before Aeneas Sylvius was promoted to the Cardinalship and Popedom, he had acted as secretary to the council of Bale, and contributed more than any body else to enforce this opinion: that the general council was above the Pope, and that it is in the former's power to effect a reformation, both in the chief and members of the church. Seated on St. Peter's chair, Piccolomini recanted, condemned his former doctrine, and published against it, the famous bull, known by the first word of it, under the title of *Execrabilis*, by which he censures appeals from the holy see to the council, as of none effect, execrable, and contrary to the holy canons of the church. Yet we see no where, that the Latin Musty ever disavowed his being the author of the romance of Eurialus and Lucretia.

# THE GRAVE ROBBERS

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ANONYMOUS

Written about 1852 for a Christmas Annual, the *Garland*, for that year.

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“CAN I DEPEND ON your punctuality to-night?” said Brant to his associates, while he lingered for a moment with them on the steps of the old medical college, in Mason Street, as they had finished the last exercise for the day, and seemed to be planning some adventure.

“Yes, certainly—name your hour and place,” were the replies from half-a-dozen voices. “Let us see, there are six of us,” continued the leader. “Well, see that you five approach by different streets, so as to be at the head of Craigie’s Bridge at precisely six minutes before eleven o’clock this evening, neither earlier nor later. But for a word to distinguish you from stragglers that may be met.”

“Leonora,” said one, with a sly glance at the leader, as if inclined to tease him on account of his reputed partiality for a lady of that name. Brant blushed deeply, but recovering himself, replied, “Well, whoever can pronounce the name of such an angel, I shall know to be my friend; so *Leonora* shall be our watchword to-night.”

A startling thrill rushed through the veins of De Angeur, who had made the proposition, as it recoiled on his reflection; for he himself was the secret competitor of Brant for the good graces of Leonora Wales. To gather inspiration from such a name, for what nearly approached to deeds of blood, was indeed shocking to the last degree; but it was settled: and the jest of De Angeur had made the phantom spirit of female gentleness and love the bond of union to a lawless bandit.

These preliminaries being settled, the students were off to their various lodgings.

In the mean time we may give a few details that will throw some light on the development of this sketch.

Brant was a young man from the country, about twenty-two years of age, who had nearly completed his medical education, and was taking his last course of lectures at Boston, preparatory to a degree. He was lean and spare in his figure, and somewhat fiery and impatient in his disposition. But he had a heart for any adventure, and had been appointed leader of a club of students, whose object was to procure subjects for private dissection. During his residence in the city he made the acquaintance of several respectable families, and was regarded by his fellows as remarkably popular with the ladies, either from a certain kind of ease and gracefulness in his manners, or more probably, from the nearness of the day at which he expected to effect a settlement in life. But Brant was less interested for his own reputation in these matters, than for the interest which he might possess in the heart of the beautiful and accomplished Leonora Wales, whom he had met occasionally at the house of her uncle in the city. He had called a few times at Mr. Wales', her uncle, as an acquaintance of the family, and once in company with De Angeur; but from diffidence or prudence, had refrained from the declaration of his passion, till the lady had returned to the residence of her father, a few miles into the country. Brant had frequently expressed to De Angeur, unaware of the feelings of the latter, his purpose, when the lecture term should close, of seeking out the retreat of so lovely a flower; and it was a trespass on the confidence of this intimacy by the latter, in suggesting the name of *Leonora* as the watchword on the night in question.

But, to return: the bells of the city, faithful in uttering the knells of retreating time, had beat their solemn curfew over the still busy and thoughtless throng, and another hour, and another still, was passed, and the half-hour bell sent forth its single tone, when Brant seated himself on the box of a teamster-waggon that had been hired with a pair of spirited steeds, for the adventure of the night. As he pushed forward with a deafening clatter over the pavements towards the point of rendezvous, he glanced at

his watch, by the gleam of a lamp, and counted but fifteen minutes to eleven o'clock. "Is Brant to be the delinquent to-night?" he mutteringly inquired to himself. "Let us see—I have but a mile and a quarter, and nine minutes left yet." With this thought he cracked his heavy whip, and was onward with a speed that seemed to leave behind the fear of watchmen, police, or jails. At the minute he was at the spot appointed, and the dark figures of several persons approaching, as had been directed, were recognized as his comrades, as they uttered the watchword that waked the most endeared interests and associations in his heart.

The pause was but for a moment. The team hurried over the bridge with a speed that defied the teeth of the law; and in half an hour, the six fellow-students were riding rapidly through the open country.

"What news?" said De Angeur.

"Capital," replied Brant. "We shall have a good subject, a safe return, and cheaper than to pay fifteen dollars for a dead sailor or nigger at the hospital; besides the advantage of a little exercise in the open air. From the deaths that I have seen noticed in the late papers, we have our option to stop at West Cambridge, or to push up to Lexington, where we may get the bones of a suicide, that will be worth at least fifty dollars."

"I move, then, that we go to Lexington," said one of the company. "And I," "and I," added two or three more. Brant and De Angeur did not express an opinion; but, while shortly after discussing the distance they had come, the latter observed, that, while passing two or three days before, near the spot where they then were, he met a funeral procession, and understood, on inquiry, it was that of a young woman who died from the wounds received by the upsetting of a carriage. Just at that moment the moon arose in brilliancy, to shed its light over the landscape.

"There!" said one, "is a new-made grave," as the risen light revealed a mound of new dug earth embowered in a clump of white oak brush-wood a few yards from the public way.

Brant reined up his horses, and suggested that it might be as well to finish the work of the night there. "No, no," objected some of the company, "let us to Lexington, and have the fifty dollar subject." But it was concluded that the latter enterprise

could not be accomplished, so as to return before daylight. So, heading the team to the city, they gathered around the resting-place of their expected prey with spade and other implements requisite for their work. De Angeur plied the spade with all his effort for a few minutes, when its edge struck, through the light loose gravel, a resisting substance with a hollow sound, as upon the head of a coffin. When the head of the coffin was fairly exposed, to Brant, the leader, was accorded the responsibility of opening its lid, and determining the fitness of the corpse for anatomical purposes. It should be noted, that grave robbers usually provide themselves with an iron hook about three or four feet in length, which, being fastened in the jaws of the corpse, enables them to draw it from the grave through the lid of the coffin, while the latter remains undisturbed in the ground.

Brant had taken his position at the head of the grave with this hook in his hands, and, having opened the coffin, had fixed it in the jaw of the unconscious sleeper, whose face was yet hidden from view by the darkness that still rested in the excavation that had been made.

"What we do here," said Brant, "must be done quickly," as by the aid of another he drew up to the pale light of the moon the wasted form of a youthful female, delicately and tastefully arrayed in the habiliments of death.

"She must have been of good family," said one, "for whose feelings we ought to have more respect."

"A fig for your family and respect," said Brant, but the words were scarcely uttered, when the leader fell down upon the earth as with the shock of death. One glance at the features of that wasted clay, in the broad moon, discovered to Brant the person of Leonora Wales, whose home he had conceived the purpose of seeking for a different object than what governed the present enterprise. The self-possession of the students forsook them, on witnessing the fall of Brant, and in three minutes they were hurried away on their return to Boston, without stopping to inquire his fate.

The shocking spectacle was witnessed by the citizens on the following morning, of Brant chilled in death, with the too certain evidence that he had been the violator of the grave of one whom

he had purposed to make the companion of his life; for the grave robbers' hook was still clenched in his hand, while the face of his intended victim, as the corpse had sunk partially back to its resting-place, seemed to look the judgment of heaven upon one who had made her sainted name a watchword in such a deed of darkness and horror.

## THE FAITHFUL AMULET

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W. C. MORROW

BORN: Alabama, 1854. DIED: Ojai, California, June 3, 1923.

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A QUAIN OLD ROGUE, who called himself Rabaya, the Mystic, was one of the many extraordinary characters of that odd corner of San Francisco known as the Latin Quarter. His business was the selling of charms and amulets, and his generally harmless practices received an impressive aspect from his Hindu parentage, his great age, his small, wizened frame, his deeply wrinkled face, his outlandish dress, and the barbaric fittings of his den.

One of his most constant customers was James Ficeman, the half-piratical owner and skipper of the *Blue Crane*. This queer little barkentine, of light tonnage, but wonderful sailing qualities, is remembered in every port between Sitka and Callao. All sorts of strange stories are told of her exploits, but these mostly were manufactured by superstitious and highly imaginative sailors, who commonly demonstrate the natural affinity existing between idleness and lying. It has been said not only that she engaged in smuggling, piracy, and "blackbirding" (which is kidnapping Gilbert Islanders and selling them to the coffee-planters of Central America), but that she maintained special relations with Satan, founded on the power of mysterious charms which her skipper was supposed to have procured from some mysterious source and was known to employ on occasion. Beyond the information which his manifests and clearance papers divulged, nothing of his supposed shady operations could be learned either from him or his crew; for his sailors, like him, were a strangely silent lot—all sharp,

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keen-eyed young fellows who never drank and who kept to themselves when in port. An uncommon circumstance was that there were never any vacancies in the crew, except one that happened as the result of Freeman's last visit to Rabaya, and it came about in the following remarkable manner:

Freeman, like most other men who follow the sea, was superstitious, and he ascribed his fair luck to the charms which he secretly procured from Rabaya. It is now known that he visited the mystic whenever he came to the port of San Francisco, and there are some today who believe that Rabaya had an interest in the supposed buccaneering enterprises of the *Blue Crane*.

Among the most intelligent and active of the *Blue Crane's* crew was a Malay known to his mates as the Flying Devil. This had come to him by reason of his extraordinary agility. No monkey could have been more active than he in the rigging; he could make flying leaps with astonishing ease. He could not have been more than twenty-five years old, but he had the shrivelled appearance of an old man, and was small and lean. His face was smooth-shaved and wrinkled, his eyes deep-set and intensely black and brilliant. His mouth was his most forbidding feature. It was large, and the thin lips were drawn tightly over large and protruding teeth, its aspect being prognathous and menacing. Although quiet and not given to laughter, at times he would smile, and then the expression of his face was such as to give even Freeman a sensation of impending danger.

It was never clearly known what was the real mission of the *Blue Crane* when she sailed the last time from San Francisco. Some supposed that she intended to loot a sunken vessel of her treasure; others that the enterprise was one of simple piracy, involving the killing of the crew and the scuttling of the ship in mid-ocean; others that a certain large consignment of opium, for which the customs authorities were on the lookout, was likely about to be smuggled into some port of Puget Sound. In any event, the business ahead must have been important, for it is now known that in order to ensure its success Freeman bought an uncommonly expensive and potent charm from Rabaya.

When Freeman went to buy this charm he failed to notice that the Flying Devil was slyly following him; neither he nor the half-

blind charm-seller observed the Malay slip into Rabaya's den and witness the matter that there went forward. The intruder must have heard something that stired every evil instinct in him. Rabaya (whom I could hardly be persuaded to believe under oath) years afterwards told me that the charm which he sold to Freeman was one of extraordinary virtue. For many generations it had been in the family of one of India's proudest rajahs, and until it was stolen the arms of England could not prevail over that part of the far East. If borne by a person of lofty character (as he solemnly informed me he believed Freeman to be) it would never fail to bring the highest good fortune; for, although the amulet was laden with evil powers as well as good, a worthy person could resist the evil and employ only the good. Contrariwise, the amulet in the hands of an evil person would be a most potent and dangerous engine of harm.

It was a small and very old trinket, made of copper and representing a serpent twined grotesquely about a human heart; through the heart a dagger was thrust, and the loop for holding the suspending string was formed by one of the coils of the snake. The charm had a wonderful history, which must be reserved for a future story; the sum of it being that as it had been as often in the hands of bad men as of good, it had wrought as many calamities as blessings. It was perfectly safe and useful—so Rabaya soberly told me—in the hands of such a man as Freeman.

Now, as no one knows the soundings and breadth of his own wickedness, the Flying Devil (who, Rabaya explained, must have overheard the conversation attending its transference to Freeman) reflected only that if he could secure possession of the charm his fortune would be made; as he could not procure it by other means, he must steal it. Moreover, he must have seen the price—five thousand dollars in gold—which Freeman paid for the trinket; and that alone was sufficient to move the Malay's cupidity. At all events, it is known that he set himself to steal the charm and desert from the barkentine.

From this point on to the catastrophe my information is somewhat hazy. I cannot say, for instance, just how the theft was committed, but it is certain that Freeman was not aware of it until a considerable time had passed. What did concern him

particularly was the absence of the Malay when the barkentine was weighing anchor and giving a line for a tow out to sea. The Malay was a valuable sailor; to replace him adequately was clearly so impossible a task that Freeman decided, after a profitless and delaying search of hours, to leave port without him or another in his place. It was with a heavy heart, somewhat lightened by a confident assumption that the amulet was safe in his possession, that Freeman headed down the channel for the Golden Gate.

Meanwhile, the Flying Devil was having strange adventures. In a hastily arranged disguise, the principal feature of which was a gentleman's street dress, in which he might pass careless scrutiny as a thrifty Japanese awkwardly trying to adapt himself to the customs of his environment, he emerged from a water-front lodging-house of the poorer sort, and ascended leisurely to the summit of Telegraph Hill, in order to make a careful survey of the city from that prominent height; for it was needful that he know how best to escape. From that alluring eminence he saw not only a great part of the city, but also nearly the whole of the bay of San Francisco and the shores, towns, and mountains lying beyond. His first particular attention was given to the *Blue Crane*, upon which he looked nearly straight down as she rolled gently at her moorings at the foot of Lombard Street. Two miles to the west he saw the trees which conceal the soldiers' barracks, and the commanding general's residence on the high promontory known as Black Point, and these invited him to seek concealment in their shadows until the advent of night would enable him to work his way down the peninsula of San Francisco to the distant blue mountains of San Mateo. Surmising that Freeman would make a search for him, and that it would be confined to the docks and their near vicinity, he imagined that it would not be a difficult matter to escape.

After getting his bearings the Malay was in the act of descending the hill by its northern flank, when he observed a stranger leaning against the parapet crowning the hill. The man seemed to be watching him. Not reflecting that his somewhat singular appearance might have accounted for the scrutiny, his suspicions were roused; he feared, albeit wrongly, that he was followed, for the stranger had come up soon after him. Assuming an air of indif-

ference, he strolled about until he was very near the stranger, and then with the swiftness and ferocity of a tiger he sprang and slipped a knife-blade between the man's ribs. The stranger sank with a groan, and the Malay fled down the hill.

It was a curious circumstance that the man fell in front of one of the openings which neglect had permitted the rains to wash underneath the parapet. He floundered as some dying men will, and these movements caused him to work his body through the opening. That done, he started rolling down the steep eastern declivity, the speed of his flight increasing with every bound. Many cottages are perched precariously on this precipitous slope. Mrs. Armour, a resident of one of them, was sitting in a rear room near the window, sewing, when she was amazed to see a man flying through the sash close beside her. He came with so great violence that he tore through a thin partition into an adjoining room and landed in a shapeless heap against the opposite wall. Mrs. Armour screamed for help. A great commotion ensued, but it was some time before the flight of the body was connected with a murder on the parapet. Nevertheless, the police were active, and presently a dozen of them were upon the broad trail which the murderer had left in his flight down the hill.

In a short time the Malay found himself in the lumber-piles of the northern water-front. Thence, after gathering himself together, he walked leisurely westward in the rear of the wire-works, and traversed a little sand-beach where mothers and nurses had children out for an airing. The desperate spirit of perversity which possessed the man (and which Rabaya afterwards explained by the possession of the amulet), made reckless by a belief that the charm which he carried would preserve him from all menaces, led him to steal a small hand-satchel that lay on the beach near a well-dressed woman. He walked away with it, and then opened it and was rejoiced to find that it contained some money and fine jewelry. At this juncture one of the children, who had observed the Malay's theft, called the woman's attention to him. She started in pursuit, raising a loud outcry, which emptied the adjacent drinking-saloons of a pursuing crowd.

The Malay leaped forward with ample ability to outstrip all his pursuers, but just as he arrived in front of a large swimming estab-

ishment a bullet from a policeman's pistol brought him to his knees. The crowd quickly pressed around him. The criminal staggered to his feet, made a fierce dash at a man who stood in his way, and sank a good knife into his body. Then he bounded away, fled swiftly past a narrow beach where swimming-clubs have their houses, and disappeared in the ruins of a large old building that lay at the foot of a sandy bluff on the water's edge. He was trailed a short distance within the ruins by a thin stream of blood which he left, and there he was lost. It was supposed that he had escaped to the old woollen-mill on Black Point.

As in all other cases where a mob pursues a fleeing criminal, the search was wild and disorderly, so that if the Malay had left any trail beyond the ruins it would have been obliterated by trampling feet. Only one policeman was in the crowd, but others, summoned by telephone, were rapidly approaching from all directions. Unintelligent and contradictory rumours bewildered the police for a time, but they formed a long picket line covering an arc which stretched from North Beach to the new gas-works far beyond Black Point.

It was about this time that Captain Freeman cast off and started out to sea.

The summit of Black Point is crowned with the tall eucalyptus-trees which the Flying Devil had seen from Telegraph Hill. A high fence, which enclosed the general's house, extends along the bluff of Black Point, near the edge. A sentry paced in front of the gate to the grounds, keeping out all who had not provided themselves with a pass. The sentry had seen the crowd gathering towards the east, and in the distance he noticed the brass buttons of the police glistening in the western sunlight. He wondered what could be afoot.

While he was thus engaged he observed a small, dark, wiry man emerging upon the bluff from the direction of the woollen-mill at its eastern base. The stranger made straight for the gate.

"You can't go in there," said the soldier, "unless you have a pass."

"Da w'at?" asked the stranger.

"A pass," repeated the sentry; and then, seeing that the man was a foreigner and imperfectly acquainted with English, he made

signs to explain his remark, still carrying his bayonet tipped rifle at shoulder-arms. The stranger, whose sharp gleam of eye gave the soldier an odd sensation, nodded and smiled.

"Oh!" said he; "I have."

He thrust his hand into his side-pocket, advancing meanwhile, and sending a swift glance about. In the next moment the soldier found himself sinking to the ground with an open jugular.

The Malay slipped within the grounds and disappeared in the shrubbery. It was nearly an hour afterwards that the soldier's body was discovered, and, the crowd of police and citizens arriving, it became known to the garrison that the desperate criminal was immediately at hand. The bugle sounded and the soldiers came tumbling out of barracks. Then began a search of every corner of the post.

It is likely that a feeling of relief came to many a stout heart when it was announced that the man had escaped by water, and was now being swiftly carried down the channel towards the Golden Gate by the ebb tide. He was clearly seen in a small boat, keeping such a course as was possible by means of a rude board in place of oars. His escape had occurred thus: Upon entering the grounds he ran along the eastern fence, behind the shrubbery, to a transverse fence separating the garden from the rear premises. He leaped the fence, and then found himself face to face with a large and formidable mastiff. He killed the brute in a strange and bold manner—by choking. There was evidence of a long and fearful struggle between man and brute. The apparent reason for the man's failure to use the knife was the first necessity of choking the dog into silence and the subsequent need of employing both hands to maintain that advantage.

After disposing of the dog the Flying Devil, wounded though he was, performed a feat worthy of his sobriquet; he leaped the rear fence. At the foot of the bluff he found a boat chained to a post sunk into the sand. There was no way to release the boat except by digging up the post. This the Malay did with his hands for tools, and then threw the post into the boat, and pushed off with a board that he found on the beach. Then he swung out into the tide, and it was some minutes afterwards that he was discovered from the fort; and then he was so far away, and there was

so much doubt of his identity, that the gunners hesitated for a time to fire upon him. Then two dramatic things occurred.

Meeting the drifting boat was a heavy bank of fog which was rolling in through the Golden Gate. The murderer was heading straight for it, paddling vigorously with the tide. If once the fog should enfold him he would be lost in the Pacific or killed on the rocks almost beyond a peradventure, and yet he was heading for such a fate with all the strength that he possessed. This was what first convinced his pursuers that he was the man whom they sought—none other would have pursued so desperate a course. At the same time a marine glass brought conviction, and the order was given to open fire.

A six-pound brass cannon roared, and splinters flew from the boat; but its occupant, with tantalizing bravado, rose and waved his hand defiantly. The six-pounder then sent out a percussion shell, and just as the frail boat was entering the fog it was blown into a thousand fragments. Some of the observers swore positively that they saw the Malay floundering in the water a moment after the boat was destroyed and before he was engulfed by the fog, but this was deemed incredible. In a short time the order of the post had been restored and the police had taken themselves away.

The other dramatic occurrence must remain largely a matter of surmise, but only because the evidence is so strange.

The great steel gun employed at the fort to announce the setting of the sun thrust its black muzzle into the fog. Had it been fired with shot or shell its missile would have struck the hills on the opposite side of the channel. But the gun was never so loaded; blank cartridges were sufficient for its function. The bore of the piece was of so generous a diameter that a child or small man might have crept into it had such a feat ever been thought of or dared.

There are three circumstances indicating that the fleeing man escaped alive from the wreck of his boat, and that he made a safe landing in the fog on the treacherous rocks at the foot of the bluff crowned by the guns. The first of these was suggested by the gunner who fired the piece that day, two or three hours after the destruction of the fleeing man's boat; and even that would have received no attention under ordinary circumstances, and, in fact,

did receive none at all until long afterwards, when Rabaya reported that he had been visited by Freeman, who told him of the two other strange circumstances. The gunner related that when he fired the cannon that day he discovered that it recoiled in a most unaccountable manner, as though it had been loaded with something in addition to a blank cartridge. But he had loaded the gun himself, and was positive that he had placed no shot in the barrel. At that time he was utterly unable to account for the recoil.

The second strange occurrence came to my knowledge through Rabaya. Freeman told him that as he was towing out to sea that afternoon he encountered a heavy fog immediately after turning from the bay into the channel. The tow-boat had to proceed very slowly. When his vessel had arrived at a point opposite Black Point he heard the sunset gun, and immediately afterwards strange particles began to fall upon the barkentine, which was exactly in the vertical plane of the gun's range. He had sailed many waters and had seen many kinds of showers, but this was different from all others. Fragments of a sticky substance fell all over the deck, and clung to the sails and spars where they touched them. They seemed to be finely shredded flesh, mixed with particles of shattered bone, with a strip of cloth here and there; and the particles that looked like flesh were of a blackish red and smelled of powder. The visitation gave the skipper and his crew a "creepy" sensation, and awed them somewhat—in short, they were depressed by the strange circumstance to such an extent that Captain Freeman had to employ stern measures to keep down a mutiny, so fearful were the men of going to sea under that terrible omen.

The third circumstance is equally singular. As Freeman was pacing the deck and talking reassuringly to his crew his foot struck a small, grimy, metallic object lying on the deck. He picked it up and discovered that it, too, bore the odor of burned powder. When he had cleaned it he was amazed to discover that it was the amulet which he had bought that very day from Rabaya. He could not believe it was the same until he had made a search and found that it had been stolen from his pocket.

It needs only to be added that the Flying Devil was never seen afterwards.



# ENDLESS RIVER

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FELIX RIESENBERG

BORN: Milwaukee, April 9, 1879. DIED: New York, November 19, 1939.

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(SELECTED)

*In the author's hand on the end-paper:*

"Dear Tiffany—

"The few of us who use the strange code of ideas sometimes exchange signals—and are agreeably surprised.

"Felix Riesenberg

"Nov 29, 1932

"Hollywood"

Page 3. ENDLESS RIVER. Last night I lay awake. It was one of the longest nights, the hours dragging, dragging. I lay in a lean-to on the slope of a hill, deep in the woods, a square of sky open to the south, clear blue-black, cold; Mintaka, Alnilam, and the nameless star, slanting in Orion's belt. The Dog Star moved over the meridian behind a screen of high trees thrashing in the wind. The air sang with falling, scraping leaves; the movement of the heavens, across the hours, was the eternal drift.

Endless River—that was it. You have come upon the face of a wide river, slipping by, brown or green, silent. Far below you is the roar of a cataract, the rumble of falls, where the river marches with increasing power, endlessly. The river is richest when it surrenders to the sea; richest in volume, laden with wreckage, with the scrapings and silt of its experience. It is at full flow outward, charged with germs and corruption, and with gold. The old river has washed below sullen cities, and they have defiled it with

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Published as a book, 1931, the contents was written over a period of years. It is fragmentary, not even a note book, but—started novels, short stories, essays, scraps.

iniquities. It has purified through reaches of sun and forest shade. It is continuous, a perpetual procession. Bear with me if this river seems without cause or plan. Our scarred world is very much that way. The endless river overruns its banks, it breaks down dykes, it floods cultivated plains and blots out formal gardens with its wash of mud; it knows no law greater than that of necessity. Many things, beautiful and perishable, odd and common, wash downstream. Corpses bob and sink in this holy Ganges of baptismal fluid. The riddle of the river, the spirit of it—who can tell?

I hesitate to be certain about uncertainties, or to stake out claims, or to make predictions. I have examined things, and most of them were mere flashes of time. Lives have shot across my orbit, close companions, and then have drifted off on asymptotic lines. How worried many are, when you come to know them; how foolish these worries seem, because you do not know enough. Here along the river the passage of drift and the quick motion of dark blue fins, the dead things and living things, mingle in the stream. Let us clear our understanding. If you are to come down river don't expect the truth, except by accident. Don't expect revelation—there is no revealing, except by inference. Don't expect the inside story many try to tell. Deep down is the impassable barrier of reticence. Here characters are fictitious, so fictitious they verge on fact. Is that young woman everything we believe her to be? No, she is probably almost everything else. Fortunately much is spared us. I am tired of the formulas we are urged to follow, of the ikons we are taught to respect. I am chilled by those paid to enthuse me. I have low opinion of men and women, not because they fail in heroism, and are often less than polite, but because most of us do such despicable things when we feel certain no one will find us out. We reveal ourselves only to those so near it does not matter. If I am wrong in this, so far as you are concerned, stop.

An enormous mass of evidence has been collected, most of it printed in endless papers constantly rolling and folding from the presses, but far greater than this is the overwhelming shadowy tide that never reaches print. All of the unknown story is true; as true as truth. It unwinds endlessly like the river and slips by, incoherent except by its repeated cries and laughter. Perhaps there is little sense in going on. Stick to established rafts, cling to the

customs of the country, hold fast, shut your eyes, pray. But the stream has taken hold, there is such a thing as guidance, without direction. No river runs backward. The stream keeps moving even against the push of flooding tides, surging down with increasing impetus on the ebb; pressures rise; tumbling moments, hours and years join the river.

Books—novels, treatises, tracts, and the like—are chopped into chapters. But you cannot cut up a river. You cannot stop it and let a little trickle out after filtering impurities. The river keeps on, and so does this, until lost in the endless path of time. This book must run on, but any one can stop, at any time, and many will, as many always do. When in doubt, stop, and forget. The world had to await the ages for its Columbus and Magellan. There is little ardent enterprise in these days, in spite of the constant shout about it. Heroes do stunts but are always back in season to tell, or they arrange to have their life-adventures syndicated. While high enterprise seems to diminish, an enormous hazard presses on the millions constantly plotting to avoid it, and failing miserably. It cuts us down, hounds us, flays us, and betrays us; we have less and less to say about the disposition of our lives. No, this is not an expose of the materialistic, it is not a document heavy with suggested remedies. If you are to come down river, don't expect to find a message. You will be disappointed. If you are screening for pornographic garbage, you will be disappointed. The sexual obsession is referred to in just that way. This common function, so it seems, still offers impoverished minds an only theme. There is no attempt here to restore confidence—quite the contrary. There is no propaganda for the thousand brands of unrest being offered to the trade. All of this can be skipped; time may be saved thereby. If you save enough time you will be very prosperous or stupid, or both. I have found it difficult to conform to limitations. I have projected myself into situations and beyond them. I have hated, in fact, to learn the ending of affairs; always have I read the end with a feeling of regret. In life one never knows what the end will be—never. And yet it is interesting to inquire, after many many years, "What ever became of Nancy?"

Here the plan, if it is a plan, will be to follow on in much the way all of us stumble, bumping our shins in the dark hallway of

doubt, with here and there a break of luck, or a kiss, or the friendly grip of a hand, amid the crew we rub against and often do not like. One of my friends, a man of heart, always helping, always cheerful, gave himself freely. In the end a twisted mind warped under his friendship. The humane man was shot by the crazy wreck he had helped. It was the old gulf of station and wealth, so dangerous to cross. The caste system is not confined to India. Caution first, last, and all the time. But here we take a broader view and, as this is fiction, only that, maybe a novel, maybe not—you make your own decision—wide views are disclosed along the river; no one need be told that some of it is true.

Page 23. The brain of man, the cunning sponge, measures the speed of light, analyzes the rays from distant stars, breaks down the structure of the atom, and ranges far through space to speculate on the reason for the universe. The same brain keeps puzzling away, constantly hitting upon half-revealed discoveries. The more discoveries we make, the more trouble we have piecing them together. The greater our scientific progress, the greater our material problems. Nothing can stop this process, and nothing within sight can regulate the machinery which grows more powerful and relentless day by day.

Our plumbers, carpenters, and policemen are constantly at work patching or puncturing the old engine while scientists are busy fitting it with newer and newer devices for probing into its vitals or adding to its parts.

Then we have the trouble shooters, fellows who know exactly what is the matter with everything. Every forward-looking magazine prints articles, cutting, searching, penetrating screeds, telling us just what is necessary to make things work smoothly. Most of this advice is cheap, five, ten, twenty-five, and even fifty cents. Take your choice. The dollar magazines are ponderously certain. People wait. Political platforms, if still to be found, will make strange reading a thousand years from now. And, of course, everything must be made to pay, and everybody pays. Why can't we reduce the whole business to a system? At once a thousand systems are offered, ready and itching to be put into action at once. Ask the citizen about this, and he will assure you he is a staunch

Republican, or Democrat, or Socialist, or Communist, or something, and that as soon as every one else is the same the world will settle down to peace and prosperity. Economists tell the exact facts. We have produced too much wheat—therefore many millions are hungry. We make too many shoes; our machinery has outrun the purchase power of the world; therefore millions must be without shoes. If we make things too fast, then no one can buy them, and of course we cannot give anything away. It's a complicated puzzle no matter how you look at it. When things get too bad we can have a big war, when the unemployed are assembled in regiments, while accountants keep track of the debts constantly growing bigger and bigger. Every one must have a job, or a graft, or a racket, or possibly a position or a competence. The nicest thing of all is to have a very competent competence. If every one was on a pension, and this may be possible some day, people would feel more like obeying the laws, and much of the sordid side would be eliminated. But never give way to despair. It is quite the wrong thing to do. Still the old river keeps flowing, and with it the nasty job of dredging, the world is full of disagreeable necessities. Millions of words are written celebrating eternal hope. Almost every story ends right, every struggle is toward victory, every ordeal is crowned by success, or nothing is said about it. Forget failure, turn your eyes from the dismal, concentrate on beauty. We like to leave the talkies with a shred of hope clinging to the half-torn ticket stub.

Have you ever considered that if every thumb print is different, perhaps everything else is different? No two people are alike. Heads are particularly different, and what is in the heads is nobody's business. Yet originals, individualists, bright intellects, and the gang who lead the laughter and point the way are alarmed by an idea that we are becoming standardized. They assume that because a sheet is read by millions, the minds so occupied are the same. This is an error. The magazines are always the same, but the minds that rub against their fillings are as varied as the fish in the sea. A million minds alike would conquer the world. No matter what they wanted, so long as they all wanted it together and in the same way, they would get it. But remember, please, they never will, for no two minds are alike, no two thoughts are alike,

and no one can prove this or disprove it. After the atom has been reduced to its millions of component parts, perhaps we will gain cleverness enough to measure the limits of an idea or to separate a simple thought into its components, reassemble it, and produce a completely different idea out of the conception subjected to analysis. Psychologists will tell you all about this, employing words. Words and ideas are as far apart as north and south. The best way to hide the truth is to print it and make it available. We work farther along the muddy banks, the survivors become delightfully few.

Things are getting frightfully complicated. It is wise, perhaps, to think of them as being simple. How far would an honest man get who was also so simple as to believe that every one else was as honest as himself? Just when, in the process of training a child, should the frightful facts be told, or should the child be allowed to find out for himself?

Endless controversy goes on about the so-called problem of telling the child. Children are getting brighter at an earlier age. The first thing they learn, so it seems, is the fact that their elders are liars, even though they impart to them a stultified version called the secret of sex. Few parents have the hardihood, or the intelligence, to tell how they get on in the world, or how they don't get on, and why. The business we are engaged in is tricky, even though we go about it with the best of intentions. Traps are being sprung, cross interests set up meshes of entanglements, men and women creep through an endless no-man's-land. It's a bitter thing to contemplate, unless you have a rugged streak of humor and can take it on the chin, time after time, and chalk up the score to experience, experience wiped out with each life.

Page 88. Need we lie to each other, after all these hours and pages together? Here we are, the team, an old author with holes in his trousers, where shreds of burning tobacco have dropped unnoticed, and the enduring reader, dredging into the case of Civilized Man versus God. The book threatens to be a hundred thousand pages long, a life sentence. By chopping, by throwing out carloads of testimony, by ignoring evidence, by the wholesale squassation of sentiment, by dumping current agitations, we get

on toward an understanding; for our characters are not only people, but are the things that make the people what they are. Skunks cannot help being skunks, and no rule that I know of, of conduct or of prayer, or of magic, can transform an eskimo into a gorilla, although they may look very much alike. The old beau we have just left riding with the sentimental female into the night, with one eye on the meter and a warm hand stealing upward from her waist, is probably a scoundrel and a fraud. Then again he may be one of Nature's masterpieces; the chances of this being so are small.

Practically every manufacturer in the fictioneering trade works up his goods from notes and pickings and impressions. Few of them go to sea for seventeen years in order to get material for a book, nor do the others have half the wonderful experiences they write about. This is, of course, as it should be; otherwise wear and tear on the profession would be great and physical depreciation would scrap most writers before a satisfactory sales appeal could be created. Now and then authentic hoboes and murderers and members of allied occupations break into expression, but their output is mainly source data for skilled artisans to make use of later on. Here practically everything placed before the jury is imaginary. You don't have to feel sorry for any of these people; you need not laugh, and you can yawn. Many eminent authorities are ready to assure you that almost everything is all right, and if you stick to Fifth Avenue below One Hundred and Third Street, you will carry away a better impression of the city when you go back home. I have looked around in places, often because others felt that I needed information. And as we work here together, we drag out shredded documents and scan them, much as learned searchers dig through ancient kitchen middens.

One talented translator, working on an inscription found on the rim of a useful vessel, after the most scholarly research, revealed the profound sentiment, "The more you micturate, the less you weep." The ancients of Herculaneum would have their joke. So here, please remember that much of the evidence can be found in greater detail and rendered with more gusto and indignation in the printed reports of the humorous commissions always investigating. The briefest notes are used in this study, and

these only have a memory value, and yet they may tinge thought and help research minds explain this document we are working out together. Whatever the findings—remember—the result will be at least 50 per cent. wrong.

Once I walked down a filthy crooked way called St. Mary's Street in old San Francisco. Women caged in cottages like overgrown doll's houses lined this garish alley. I can see it now, a gruesome place. People making profit can become supremely horrible. When the red curtains were drawn the operatives were engaged. Otherwise they stood at the open doors or sat behind the open windows, faces framed in yellow light, lips painted red—then a trademark—and investigators went by: men from Alaska, or Kansas, or the sea, looking in, opening doors, and entering. Don't shudder at this; it is evidence. Pages and pages could be filled with similar description. The names of the saints and of the Saviour have been attached to such surroundings. The Rua do Bom Jcsus, in Funchal, halfway around the world, carries on this use of sacrilege. Imagine, if you can, men and boys paying a dollar each to view a nude Chinese female! "Stripped to a gantline she wore, an' no mistake." It was worth money to hear the news, but that was many, many years ago and may give us a minute measure by which to calculate the growth of morals. Astrologers, phrenologists, chiropractors, osteopaths, pharmacists, psychologists, behaviorists, motormen, are evolved from our house of education. Fortunately, learning, or whatever passes for that, is not contagious, or our enormous rolling mills would be unable to stamp their product with appropriate marks. Once I had an exalted conception of formal learning, and then I developed an impulse toward reaction. My friend Dr. Atwater (Ph.D.), for many years Dean of Superioria, urged me to accompany him to Polyology, the capital city of that region of erudition. In a vague moment I agreed. Those of us still on safari, with the caravan, along this desert bank of endless river, and who possess the stamina, had better leave before the next year's dues are billed. But if they wish they can hold on and take it on the chin. Few people have much reverence for the weight-lifters, whether they pick up iron bars tipped with enormous hollow balls or whether they heft the ballast of learned letters. Strong men break down in health when



asked to mow the grass, and the wise develop headaches when confronted with problems not answered by their textbooks.

*Page 101.* Everything had been discovered; exploration was at an end; knowledge had completed its alphabet; savants, because of the enormous benefits paid them for overtime, had finished the story of wisdom. All men did was to perpetuate their lore. The sum total would be transmission, until the human mind could develop itself to total absorption of the tremendous mental cargo of the ages.

The wisest man of all was teaching his child.

"Daddy, what's on the other side of the moon?"

It was the one question the great minds could not answer. So they set about the business of finding out what was on the other side of the moon. The boy grew up and carried on the work started by his father, while his own children asked the unanswerable question, and they in turn took up the task. Projectiles were shot at and around the moon, and none of them came back to earth, although they were most scientifically constructed.

Then after many, many years, a great genius discovered how they might turn the moon around. This took all of the precious metal in the world, all of the copper, all of the gold, all of the platinum, for the gigantic electrical machine demanded certain elements, and there were just enough of these metals on the earth to build the vast coil that was to project its forces against the limb of the moon and turn its hidden face for the inspection of man.

During the construction of this enormous engine, the more ignorant (for there were still a few less brilliant than the rest) bewailed the labor and material expended in this final quest for knowledge. But the wisest people knew that knowledge is priceless and an end unto itself.

At a certain hour, calculated by astronomers, the whole current of the earth was sent through the coil; a beam of power impinged upon the edge of the moon; and the heavens, over the whole world, were brazen with the fumes of burning metal. Then day came and the scientists slept. As night fell it was beautifully clear. The moon had been turned, they were certain it had, but the other side looked exactly like the one every one had seen before.

Then some one suggested that they turn it back, to make sure. When the coil was again connected the engineers found it dead—all the necessary metals had been burned out of it and out of the world.

Soon there was a tremendous and unending argument. Some said the moon was the same on both sides; some said it had never been turned. In the heat of this controversy, lasting for generations, all knowledge was forgotten. Many troubled persons turned to laughing and other low forms of forgetfulness.

Page 172. But a step from the light of the City Hall, but a moment from the shadow of Park Row, a few paces from the abandoned center of news, lies a forgotten area. Here the anchors of the Brooklyn Bridge suspension cables lie far below piles of weathered ashlar, and a narrow grimy street dips toward the fringes of the lower Ghetto. This spot shadowed by the bridge and elevated is lined with lofts, tumbling and rotten with neglect. A narrow cobble-paved path is the opening of the black hole once called Murderers' Mews. It is on no map of the city. If you are curious you may find it, but go on a clear day, preferably at noon. Odors defile the air, and towering above, massive bridge approaches with their constant mutter of traffic dwarf the files of rotting wood and crumbling brick. All seems dead by day. At night the hole is alive with forms. Obscure records show that one Cowdray died there, fighting like a demon. You never heard of him? Dark stains are on the brick wall behind the Mews. Here is the crooked Court of Herkimer, the strangler, a criminal obliterated by the growth and thunder of the city. It is the dark alley where unknown men and women have been done to death. You don't have to go there; no one does. The pocket, in the sullen backwash of the bridge, is seldom seen.

In the late afternoon of Monday, October the second, a thick-set man of middle years, gray at the temples, walked slowly along those back paths. He scanned a few lines marked on a small city map. He paused before the hole. The fact of a man in a city standing pondering a problem is no great problem in itself. He might be the owner of the property—he looked prosperous—planning some scheme of renewal. He stood peering into the depth of

Murderers' Mews, his eyes following as far down the narrow four-foot passage as the line was straight, to where the turn comes, in what was once called the Pentagon of the Garotters. He stood across the street, brooding on his problem.

Was Percival Vane, scion of the Vanes of Murray Hill, was he worthy of Beryl? It was a problem the man had constantly in mind. Young Vane—rich, indolent, alone—was he worthy of Beryl? He wrote verses and had them published on vellum. He was pale; his eyes were clear as those of a child. His high forehead was smooth. He smiled engagingly—but was he worthy?

This was a serious question in the mind of the practical Craddock as his cold eyes searched down the dim passageway of Murderers' Mews. Craddock, Roderick Craddock, mining engineer, grappled the problem. "Beryl, above all else, must marry a man—a man of guts."

On the night of Tuesday, October the third, a limousine purred into the deserted heel of the tired boot of Manhattan; down Lafayette Street, the street of imagination, past the somber wall of the Tombs, beyond the courts and the yellow lighted clock face above City Hall. The hour was one. Park Row was quiet. Sharply the black car wheeled into the declivity of Frankfort Street, turning where the white statue in the Park loomed above the dirty grass like ghostly carving in a cemetery.

In the limousine were three people, Craddock, Beryl, and the slight youth, Percival Vane. All were in evening dress. A light glowed within the car, revealing serious faces. Beryl held Percival's hand; his fingers were tense. He looked straight ahead, beyond the chauffeur, his eyes bright, color mounting his forehead. His brown hair lay limp against damp temples under the hard edge of his opera hat. Roderick Craddock, grim, his jaw set with determination, also looked ahead as they entered Frankfort Street.

Down they went, down the dark slit of dipping street, across William, across Rose, by the closed-in arches of the forbidding bridge approaches saturated with the carnal odor of salted hides. Down past Gold Street—the names, decipherable under street lamps, hung in Vane's mind. The huge car slowed near the black arch over Vanderwater Street and above the curved canyon of Cliff, leading away into the night beneath a massive dome of

stone. The murky warehouse fronts towering high on Jacob Street seemed to question their errand, although anything may happen in the greatest of unusual cities.

The way of Frankfort Street narrowed; the tall spandrels of the bridge viaduct loomed black below the Roman arches. The lattice girders of the elevated railroad swept close above the street, a cage, shutting out the sky. The black limousine turned, moved deliberately to a quiet stop near the narrow curb abreast of Murderers' Mews. Craddock, during the plunge below the bridge, switched out the light. No one spoke. The widened pupils of their eyes surveyed the scene. Reality confronted them.

Stepping out on the street, his cape thrown aside, Percival Vane looked into the black blotch that marked the Mews. Unarmed except for his steel-tipped malacca cane, he must enter the dark hole, step twenty-three paces down the cobbled grade, turn sharply to the left oblique, take eleven steps to the slit between the four walls where Cowdray was slain, go on by the nook where Mrs. Fenstemacher was found on a Christmas night, her neck broken, and on through the Vale of Herkimer into the middle of the Mews.

He must then pause, for such were the precise instructions of Craddock, in the very center of the courtyard between the black blank walls. There he must strike the ferrule of his cane seven times on the stone flags, timing his strokes, at minute intervals, by his radiant watch. Craddock would also time them. Then, hooking the cane over his right arm, he must strike a match and light the cigarette between his tense lips, the two-carat engagement diamond gleaming on the little finger of his left hand. He must not call. He must not cry out in the black night of Murderers' Mews. Percival Vane understood the directions perfectly; he had repeated them to Beryl and her father on the way downtown. He might then turn, retracing his steps up through the dark alley, out over the curb and across the street to the waiting car. He must not run, but walk slowly, "like a gentleman." Such were his instructions.

"I will then light my Havana from your cigarette, lift the engagement ring from your finger, and place it upon the hand of Beryl. This, Mr. Vane, is the test I demand, the test of your courage."

A dark form stepped under the shadow of the bridge; a distant street lamp in Franklin Square struck its rays against the silky sheen of a hat. The form, slight, erect, walked steadily toward the black slit in the wall of brick. A green glint, down the slope of cobbles, glowed before him in the hole—perhaps a cat. Beryl scarched after him. A faint cry—"Oh!" He was gone.

Roderick Craddock chewed the butt of his cigar—he jumped out and stood by the side of the black car, like an expectant undertaker by a waiting hearse. He clutched the handle of the open door, his fingers tense. Many years before, when a youngster, he once stood at the smoky pit-mouth of the Guadalquivir Mine that night when the outlaw Parraba came up the shaft to murder. The scar on his temple was lucent, even in the dark.

An age passed; then the stroke of Vane's stick.

Clack!

The sound flared from the funnel of the Mews. A fold of dark movement stirred in the hole; a dim echo followed from high walls looming above. Time dragged. Silence clogged the moments.

Clack!

Vane's second signal sounded sharp, reverberating in the cold night air. He was evidently gaining confidence in the depth. A convolution of mist (or was it a solid form?) swayed downward into the depth. Against the echo marked the blow upon the flags. Craddock chewed an inch of his cigar. Why in thunder had he sent the boy into that pocket? He once imagined Vane would never start. Beryl, breathing heavily, leaned forward. Her cloak had fallen in the car, her bare shoulders and her low-cut gown (she was in white) loomed, an undressed figure in the dark. Both bent, peering into the hole.

Clack!

An hour had passed—it seemed—when they heard the third stroke. Then after an uncertain time a rumble of approaching wheels, of screeching brakes, mingled with the echo. A night train pulled into the station above Franklin Square. Craddock, swearing audibly, listening for the opening and closing of gates. The train hung silent for a time and went on, no passengers entering or alighting at that hour. Then the wheeze of opening air-brakes, the harsh rattle of departing wheels, showered them with crash-

uproar. Never did a train stop so long or make so stupendous a noise.

Had Vane signaled again? What was the count? Beads of sweat chilled Craddock's face. He tossed his high hat into the car. His eyes were on the hole, hypnotized by something in its depth. He forgot his watch—suspense dulled every sense but fear. Beryl began to moan, behind him.

Had Vane signaled again? Or was it over with? Should he rush in—Craddock the coward! Unarmed, except for his clenched fists, he leaned forward. His cigar frayed in his champing teeth. The silent hole stared back at him, a mammoth eye. Silence, heavy with the weight of autumn night, lay beneath the bridge abutments. Off somewhere, far, far off, as in a distant city, a bell tolled. Craddock crouched to spring across the street.

Clack!

The sound leapt out of the deep throat of Murders' Mews, a defiant detonation, an accusation, a challenge so powerful that even the echo was unnoticed. Beryl laughed, laughed loudly, a piercing peal. She switched on the light, sat bolt upright, gathering her cloak from the floor. Craddock turned, looking into the car with dilated eyes. Had Vane signaled once, twice, or thrice during the arrival, stopping, and departure of the train? But he still was there, brave Percival! Craddock grinned, the cigar half chewed in his twitching mouth.

From the misty pall of murk above, the high dissonance of a heavy truck on the bridge dropped down like thunder. Again a somber turning over caught their eyes straining into the depth, back into the fearful Vale of Herkimer. Beryl shivered. Then, of a sudden, a yellow smear of light, a point, as if a match had failed, moved in the dark. Was it the lighted end of Percival's cigarette?

Beryl trembled; she held her father's arm; again her cloak slipped away unnoticed. She leaned out of the car. Then, dropping to her knees, she clasped her hands in prayer. Craddock, outlined against the light of the car, froze with fear. An eternity ensued.

Clack!

Thank God! Craddock laughed. The harshness of that resounding thump! The echo sounded twice, loud tribute to its defiant start. Was it the seventh? Was it the last? Was Percival Vane,

his stick hooked over his arm, even then lighting his cigarette, the white diamond shedding fire beneath the flaming match? Did he stand there, his young face by the flame, his shirt front with its studs of pearl, white and fearless?

A quick turn over of the dark, a dull, rasping, retching sound, as if the hole was vomiting. Craddock electrified. "Go—go!" It was Beyl's plea. Craddock sprang across the black street. A cry screamed upward from the hole; it leapt suddenly, alive with horror. Heavy bodies collided between the walls.

"My God!—My God!"

A shriek trembled and amplified; echoes of the initial cry broke among the crazy walls, clattering under the arches of the bridge, mocking garbled cries wobbling like flocks of frightened birds.

"Help!"

Another train crashed overhead, thundering into the station at Franklin Square.

A heavy black limousine passed slowly out of the narrow cut at Frankfort Street and turned into the lighted emptiness of Park Row, its curtains drawn. Then its movement northward became rapid, the transmission of urgent need. It sped under the bridge platform, then melted quickly into the haze of Lafayette, the street of imagination.

Hubert Median, another of our strangely related characters, stumbled upon truth. He had acquired the habit of signing coupons, always "without obligation" and with the distinct understanding that he would be required to "send no money." And then he bought on time. The payments, the return accommodations, as they are sometimes termed, confronted him in an accusing moment. He was striving to balance an X income with an X plus Y demand. His Y assumed alarming proportions.

Then light penetrated Hubert Median's bean. He reasoned that demand is an adversary. By slaying demand he would cut down the difficulties constantly confronting him.

He turned systematic, thorough. The careless spender became the careful conspirator. He was reading the first part of a serial picked up on a subway train. His eyes lit on a statement by a woman realist that Selena So-and-so found she could combine a

thirty-cent coffee with a sixty-cent coffee and achieve the effect of a brand retailing at eighty cents. Median, pondering the problem, realized that she was making a loss in the transaction. He began to prepare his own breakfast, buying a twenty-four-cent coffee and putting it in a fancy lacquered canister that looked exactly like the dollar goods. His landlady, noting the container, accused him of extravagance.

Median found that a stiff five-cent hand scrubbing brush was better for the hair. When shaving, he rubbed in the lather with his fingers, using a moderately priced bath soap, two for five, in small hand cakes, each larger, in itself, than a quarter shaving-stick. This reflection always pleased him immensely. In the one item alone he had reduced the demands of life by ten, giving himself a scale to work by.

"A man who can increase his income by ten is liable to be mighty well off. I have done it by decreasing demand by ten." Hubert Median was right.

He went into each and every item of his outgo. He tabulated the things that set him back. He studied the list attentively; one by one he attacked and reduced his enemies to the irreducible, or killed them altogether. For instance, he found that a handful of rough cheap salt was far superior to the most expensive dentifrice.

This application, on his part, took up all of his spare time. He was a librarian, and his income from librarianism had always seemed utterly inadequate. The first month after his system was working, all of his useless incumbrances having been "repossessed," he forgot about his pay check, a thing unheard of, for he still seemed to have plenty of money left from the previous month. He went about his work in an absent-minded way. Fellow librarians believed he had come into a fortune, or had found money, as librarians often dream of doing, between the leaves of a book of essays.

Median, with his capture of prosperity, became more careful of his dress. He was still on his first month's pay, that is, the first month's pay since the application of his system, and three other pay checks lay uncashed in the top drawer of his cheap dresser where he kept his neckties, the ones he made by cutting the



surplus two inches off the tails of his shirts, neatly sewing them in a double fold. The principal librarian spoke gently to Median about the uncashed checks; the auditors, it seemed, were inquiring. He promised to cash them the next day. But he said nothing more, merely smiling faintly. He made no mention of his discovery, of the practical murder of demand.

Median, preparing his own breakfast, realized with a start that he was wasting a deal of valuable material. He had read somewhere, as librarians read, in snatches, that the Greely expedition, or the Stanley expedition, or at any rate some expedition into an undiscovered country, had saved their coffee grounds and tea leaves and had smoked them. This he began to do, blending them, five to one, with a very cheap grade of pungent shiedded pipe tobacco. The game he was engaged in was an expedition beyond the thick jungle of civilization's unnecessary needs. He hated tea, but the coffee idea started him using the complementary stimulant in the evening. He began the preparation of dinner in his chambers in order that he might save all by-products.

Median did not starve himself; he had the delight of a series of fascinating experiments in the field of nutrition. He tried to buy pemmican at a supply house outfitting voyagers but found the stuff expensive; so he made his own. He made this nutritive concoction in a second-hand meat chopper that set him back fifty cents. This is a dish of wonderful sustainment, meat-ends, suet, raisins, and cornmeal. Arctic explorers work like mules on it. He took a small cube of it with him to the library and drank copiously of water. He was completely nourished when he suddenly realized that his budget, for sustenance, was not ten times less than his allowance, but actually twenty times under his pre-war upon waste requirements.

This was a shock to Hubert Median, for he was only halfway through his first month's pay, and the five-month period had passed. He tried to extend his gastronomic requirements, but a mince pie—he could think of nothing else—made him deathly sick, and he lost twenty cents, the charge for castor oil required in this emergency. It was merely one of the setbacks always happening in the course of research.

Median, after ten months of his experiment following the great

discovery, found himself almost at the end of the first month's pay. Then a funny thing happened. As he was depositing his check in the savings bank, the clerk entered an item under the head of INTEREST.

Median had figured that he would have to use up some of his second pay check, when the interest, in neat red figures, stared him in the face.

"We compound it quarterly, Mr. Median," the clerk explained genially.

"But can I draw it out?" Median had a guilty feeling that he had no right to this extra sum.

"Certainly, sir. At any time." The clerk peered through the little window at Mr. Median. A queer figure, for he had just cut his own hair for the tenth time, but had not yet succeeded in achieving final skill in this humble art.

"Aha!" Hubert Median saw that by his perfected method, the more intense concentration against the evil of demand, he could almost go through another month on the accrued interest. He drew out the sum and deposited the check he was then about to cash.

Hubert Median, serene, well nourished, simply but plainly clad in a cloth used by iron workers, which he had fashioned into a garment from an old pattern picked up in an ash can behind a tailor's shop—one of his triumphs, by the way—went into the library, interest in his pocket, a look of supreme satisfaction spread upon his face.

"Median's certainly come into a pot of money," the second assistant librarian remarked. "The dog never peeps a word but goes right on banking his pay. Some are born lucky." He is discovered sitting at his modest desk, checking up book cards. In reality Median was far afield, chasing the last red cent of the day's unnecessary costs.

After a while Hubert Median, having reduced the harsh business of expense to its lowest common terms, began to work for refinement in the mode of his successful life. His haircut became a work of art—even, and curiously long in the back where he could not see, but chopped off straight across at the nape of his neck.

The president of the Library Board stopped him one day and was on the point of inquiring who was his barber.

Median improved his clothing, an art that began with his making of neckties out of shirt tails. He achieved a good shoulder fit, and then he attacked the problem of the shirt, buying his goods wholesale and finally working out a custom model which every one could see was no ordinary garment. He built up a personality in clothes, an expensive personality, for he was hand-tailored from head to foot. His boots he gave up, but, as the interest on his investment increased, he had the brilliant thought to wear nothing but the most expensive footwear. The first pair of shoes he bought never wore out.

Median's simple diet and the fact that he never rode but walked five miles to and from the library, having taken a modest room over by the river, added to his health; he almost burst with energy.

At the bank he was watched carefully by the principal cashier, for, once Hubert Median had made his discovery of interest, he never again used his salary funds for outgo. He managed by rigorous attention to live entirely upon interest. This, at first, was quite a triumph. For the two years following the discovery he used all his interest; then he used three-fourths of it, finally one-half, and at last only one-third. Beyond that he did not go, for Hubert had a streak of sentiment. In his walks he dispensed charities to men and slattern women who accosted him. Month by month, without fail, he deposited his base pay from the library.

A feeling, perhaps a false feeling, prevails that librarians are underpaid. Median profited when a small increase in compensation went into effect.

His life moved methodically. He was elected a trustee of the library; he was gently urged, and as gently agreed, to invest some of his fund in the stock of his bank, for his deposits had increased beyond the legal limit. Suddenly he found that instead of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. he was earning 20 and then 25 per cent. The bank stock began to climb to a point where Mr. Hubert Median could hardly realize what was going on.

Page 315. This document might easily have ended sooner; no doubt it has, for many. Always, the impatient depart; they hurry

to more important causes. The age is turbulent with those who cannot stay, and sad because of those who wait too long.

Endurance is rarer than virtue. Stout ones pass on the burning lamp. Whatever light and warmth there is devolves from them, but don't imagine this brings certain happiness. Distribution of the gifts is at the nod of chance.

More and more are questioning; the questions become increasingly insistent. The answers rest with God.

Why lay down testimony? Why spread these records, fragmentary, untrue, unfair, impossible, cruel? Perhaps there is some urgent sense to it. Did not Theophorus write to Polycarp, "The times demand thee"?

*(And here the words stop.)*

# THE SAND-MAN

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E. T. W. HOFFMANN

BORN: Königsberg, January 24, 1776. DIED: July 24, 1822.

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NATHANIEL TO LOTHAIR

I KNOW YOU are all very uneasy because I have not written for such a long, long time. Mother, to be sure, is angry, and Clara, I dare say, believes I am living here in riot and revelry, and quite forgetting my sweet angel, whose image is so deeply engraved upon my heart and mind. But that is not so; daily and hourly do I think of you all, and my lovely Clara's form comes to gladden me in my dreams, and smiles upon me with her bright eyes, as graciously as she used to do in the days when I went in and out amongst you. Oh! how could I write to you in the distracted state of mind in which I have been, and which, until now, has quite bewildered me! A terrible thing has happened to me. Dark forebodings of some awful fate threatening me are spreading themselves out over my head like black clouds, impenetrable to every friendly ray of sunlight. I must now tell you what has taken place; I must, that I see well enough, but only to think upon it makes the wild laughter burst from my lips. Oh! my dear, dear Lothair, what shall I say to make you feel, if only in an inadequate way, that that which happened to me a few days ago could thus really exercise such a hostile and disturbing influence upon my life? Oh, that you were here to see for yourself! but now you will, I suppose, take me for a superstitious ghost-seer. In a word, the terrible thing which I have experienced, the fatal effect of which I in vain exert every effort to shake off, is simply that some days

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Probably written at Dresden, before 1814.

ago, namely, on the 30th October, at twelve o'clock at noon, a dealer in weatherglasses came into my room and wanted to sell me one of his wares. I bought nothing, and threatened to kick him downstairs, whereupon he went away of his own accord.

You will conclude that it can only be very peculiar relations—relations intimately intertwined with my life—that can give significance to this event, and that it must be the person of this unfortunate hawker which has had such a very inimical effect upon me. And so it really is. I will summon up all my faculties in order to narrate to you calmly and patiently as much of the early days of my youth as will suffice to put matters before you in such a way that your keen sharp intellect may grasp everything clearly and distinctly, in bright and living pictures. Just as I am beginning, I hear you laugh and Clara say, "What's all this childish nonsense about!" Well, laugh at me, laugh heartily at me, pray do. But, good God! my hair is standing on end, and I seem to be entreating you to laugh at me in the same sort of frantic despair in which Franz Moor enticated Daniel to laugh him to scorn. But to my story.

Except at dinner we, i.e., I and my brothers and sisters, saw but little of our father all day long. His business no doubt took up most of his time. After our evening meal, which, in accordance with an old custom, was served at seven o'clock, we all went, mother with us, into father's room, and took our places around a round table. My father smoked his pipe, drinking a large glass of beer to it. Often he told us many wonderful stories, and got so excited over them that his pipe always went out; I used then to light it for him with a spill, and this formed my chief amusement. Often, again, he would give us picture-books to look at, whilst he sat silent and motionless in his easy-chair, puffing out such dense clouds of smoke that we were all as it were enveloped in mist. On such evenings mother was very sad; and directly it struck nine she said, "Come, children! off to bed! Come! The 'Sand-man' is come, I see." And I always did seem to hear something trampling upstairs with slow heavy steps; that must be the Sand-man. Once in particular I was very much frightened at this dull trampling and knocking; as mother was leading us out of the room I asked her, "O mamma! but who is this nasty Sand-man

who always sends us away from papa? What does he look like?" "There is no Sand man, my dear child," mother answered; "when I say the Sand-man is come, I only mean that you are sleepy and can't keep your eyes open, as if somebody had put sand in them." This answer of mother's did not satisfy me; nay, in my childish mind the thought clearly unfolded itself that mother denied there was a Sand-man only to prevent us being afraid,—why, I always heard him come upstairs. Full of curiosity to learn something more about this Sand-man and what he had to do with us children, I at length asked the old woman who acted as my youngest sister's attendant, what sort of a man he was—the Sand-man? "Why, 'thanael, darling, don't you know?" she replied. "Oh! he's a wicked man, who comes to little children when they won't go to bed and throws handfuls of sand in their eyes, so that they jump out of their heads all bloody; and he puts them into a bag and takes them to the half-moon as food for his little ones; and they sit there in the nest and have hooked beaks like owls, and they pick naughty little boys' and girls' eyes out with them." After this I formed in my own mind a horrible picture of the cruel Sand-man. When anything came blundering upstairs at night I trembled with fear and dismay; and all that my mother could get out of me were the stammered words "The Sand-man! the Sand-man!" whilst the tears coursed down my cheeks. Then I ran into my bedroom, and the whole night through tormented myself with the terrible apparition of the Sand-man. I was quite old enough to perceive that the old woman's tale about the Sand-man and his little ones' nest in the half-moon couldn't be altogether true; nevertheless the Sand-man continued to be for me a fearful incubus, and I was always seized with terror—my blood always ran cold, not only when I heard anybody come up the stairs, but when I heard anybody noisily open my father's room door and go in. Often he stayed away for a long season altogether; then he would come several times in close succession.

This went on for years, without my being able to accustom myself to this fearful apparition, without the image of the horrible Sand-man growing any fainter in my imagination. His intercourse with my father began to occupy my fancy ever more and more; I was restrained from asking my father about him by an

unconquerable shyness; but as the years went on the desire waxed stronger and stronger within me to fathom the mystery myself and to see the fabulous Sand-man. He had been the means of disclosing to me the path of the wonderful and the adventurous, which so easily find lodgment in the mind of the child. I liked nothing better than to hear or read horrible stories of goblins, witches, Tom 'Thumbs, and so on; but always at the head of them all stood the Sand-man, whose picture I scribbled in the most extraordinary and repulsive forms with both chalk and coal everywhere, on the tables, and cupboard doors, and walls. When I was ten years old my mother removed me from the nursery into a little chamber off the corridor not far from my father's room. We still had to withdraw hastily whenever, on the stroke of nine, the mysterious unknown was heard in the house. As I lay in my little chamber I could hear him go into father's room, and soon afterwards I fancied there was a fine and peculiar smelling steam spreading itself through the house. As my curiosity waxed stronger, my resolve to make somehow or other the Sand man's acquaintance took deeper root. Often when my mother had gone past, I slipped quickly out of my room into the corridor, but I could never see anything, for always before I could reach the place where I could get sight of him, the Sand-man was well inside the door. At last, unable to resist the impulse any longer, I determined to conceal myself in father's room and there wait for the Sand-man.

One evening I perceived from my father's silence and mother's sadness that the Sand-man would come; accordingly, pleading that I was excessively tired, I left the room before nine o'clock and concealed myself in a hiding-place close beside the door. The street door creaked, and slow, heavy, echoing steps crossed the passage towards the stairs. Mother hurried past me with my brothers and sisters. Softly—softly—I opened father's room door. He sat as usual, silent and motionless, with his back towards it; he did not hear me; and in a moment I was in and behind a curtain drawn before my father's open wardrobe, which stood just inside the room. Nearer and nearer and nearer came the echoing footsteps. There was a strange coughing and shuffling and mumbling outside. My heart beat with expectation and fear. A quick step now close, close beside the door, a noisy rattle of the handle,



and the door flies open with a bang. Recovering my courage with an effort, I take a cautious peep out. In the middle of the room in front of my father stands the Sand man, the bright light of the lamp falling full upon his face. The Sand-man, the terrible Sand-man, is the old advocate Coppelius who often comes to dine with us.

But the most hideous figure could not have awakened greater trepidation in my heart than this Coppelius did. Picture to yourself a large broad-shouldered man, with an immensely big head, a face the colour of yellow-ochre, grey bushy eyebrows, from beneath which two piercing, greenish, cat-like eyes glittered, and a prominent Roman nose hanging over his upper lip. His distorted mouth was often screwed up into a malicious smile; then two dark-red spots appeared on his cheeks, and a strange hissing noise proceeded from between his tightly clenched teeth. He always wore an ash-grey coat of an old-fashioned cut, a waistcoat of the same, and nether extremities to match, but black stockings and buckles set with stones on his shoes. His little wig scarcely extended beyond the crown of his head, his hair was curled round high up above his big red ears, and plastered to his temples with cosmetic, and a broad closed hair-bag stood out prominently from his neck, so that you could see the silver buckle that fastened his folded neck-cloth. Altogether he was a most disagreeable and horribly ugly figure; but what we children detested most of all was his big coarse hairy hands; we could never fancy anything that he had once touched. This he had noticed; and so, whenever our good mother quietly placed a piece of cake or sweet fruit on our plates, he delighted to touch it under some pretext or other, until the bright tears stood in our eyes, and from disgust and loathing we lost the enjoyment of the tit-bit that was intended to please us. And he did just the same thing when father gave us a glass of sweet wine on holidays. Then he would quickly pass his hand over it, or even sometimes raise the glass to his blue lips, and he laughed quite sardonically when all we dared do was to express our vexation in stifled sobs. He habitually called us the "little brutes"; and when he was present we might not utter a sound; and we cursed the ugly spiteful man who deliberately and intentionally spoilt all our little pleasures. Mother seemed to dislike

this hateful Coppelius as much as we did; for as soon as he appeared her cheerfulness and bright and natural manner were transformed into sad, gloomy seriousness. Father treated him as if he were a being of some higher race, whose ill manners were to be tolerated, whilst no efforts ought to be spared to keep him in good-humour. He had only to give a slight hint, and his favourite dishes were cooked for him and the wine uncorked.

As soon as I saw this Coppelius, therefore, the fearful and hideous thought arose in my mind that he, and he alone, must be the Sand-man; but I no longer conceived of the Sand-man as the bugbear in the old nurse's fable, who fetched children's eyes and took them to the half-moon as food for his little ones—no! but as an ugly spectre-like fiend bringing trouble and misery and ruin, both temporal and everlasting, everywhere wherever he appeared.

I was spell-bound on the spot. At the risk of being discovered, and, as I well enough knew, of being severely punished, I remained as I was, with my head thrust through the curtains listening. My father received Coppelius in a ceremonious manner. "Come, to work!" cried the latter, in a hoarse snarling voice, throwing off his coat. Gloomily and silently my father took off his dressing-gown, and both put on long black smock-frocks. Where they took them from I forgot to notice. Father opened the folding-doors of a cupboard in the wall; but I saw that what I had so long taken to be a cupboard was really a dark recess, in which was a little hearth. Coppelius approached it, and a blue flame crackled upwards from it. Round about were all kinds of strange utensils. Good God! as my old father bent down over the fire how different he looked! His gentle and venerable features seemed to be drawn up by some dreadful convulsive pain into an ugly, repulsive Satanic mask. He looked like Coppelius. Coppelius plied the red-hot tongs and drew bright glowing masses out of the thick smoke and began assiduously to hammer them. I fancied that there were men's faces visible round about, but without eyes, having ghastly deep black holes where the eyes should have been. "Eyes here! Eyes here!" cried Coppelius, in a hollow sepulchral voice. My blood ran cold with horror; I screamed and tumbled out of my hiding-place into the floor. Coppelius immediately seized upon me. "You little

brute. You little brute!" he bleated, grinding his teeth. Then, snatching me up, he threw me on the hearth, so that the flames began to singe my hair. "Now we've got eyes—eyes—a beautiful pair of children's eyes," he whispered, and, thrusting his hands into the flames he took out some red-hot grains and was about to strew them into my eyes. Then my father clasped his hands and entreated him, saying, "Master, master, let my Nathanael keep his eyes—oh! do let him keep them." Coppelius laughed shrilly and replied, "Well then, the boy may keep his eyes and whine and pule his way through the world; but we will now at any rate observe the mechanism of the hand and the foot." And therewith he roughly laid hold upon me, so that my joints cracked, and twisted my hands and my feet, pulling them now this way, and now that, "That's not quite right altogether! It's better as it was!—the old fellow knew what he was about." Thus lisped and hissed Coppelius; but all around me grew black and dark; a sudden convulsive pain shot through all my nerves and bones; I knew nothing more.

I felt a soft warm breath fanning my cheek; I awakened as if out of the sleep of death; my mother was bending over me. "Is the Sand-man still there?" I stammered. "No, my dear child; he's been gone a long, long time; he'll not hurt you." Thus spoke my mother, as she kissed her recovered darling and pressed him to her heart. But why should I tire you, my dear Lothair? why do I dwell at such length on these details, when there's so much remains to be said? Enough—I was detected in my eavesdropping, and roughly handled by Coppelius. Fear and terror had brought on a violent fever, of which I lay ill several weeks. "Is the Sand-man still there?" these were the first words I uttered on coming to myself again, the first sign of my recovery, of my safety. Thus, you see, I have only to relate to you the most terrible moment of my youth for you to thoroughly understand that it must not be ascribed to the weakness of my eyesight if all that I see is colourless, but to the fact that a mysterious destiny has hung a dark veil of clouds about my life, which I shall perhaps only break through when I die.

Coppelius did not show himself again; it was reported he had left the town.

It was about a year later when, in pursuance of the old unchanged custom, we sat around the round table in the evening. Father was in very good spirits, and was telling us amusing tales about his youthful travels. As it was striking nine we all at once heard the street door creak on its hinges, and slow ponderous steps echoed across the passage and up the stairs. "That is Coppelius," said my mother, turning pale. "Yes, it is Coppelius," replied my father in a faint broken voice. The tears started from my mother's eyes. "But, father, father," she cried, "must it be so?" "This is the last time," he replied; "this is the last time he will come to me, I promise you. Go now, go and take the children. Go, go to bed—good-night."

As for me, I felt as if I were converted into cold, heavy stone; I could not get my breath. As I stood there immovable my mother seized me by the arm. "Come, Nathanael! do come along!" I suffered myself to be led away; I went into my room. "Be a good boy and keep quiet," mother called after me; "get into bed and go to sleep." But, tortured by indescribable fear and uneasiness, I could not close my eyes. That hateful, hideous Coppelius stood before me with his glittering eyes, smiling maliciously down upon me; in vain did I strive to banish the image. Somewhere about midnight there was a terrific crack, as if a cannon were being fired off. The whole house shook; something went rustling and clattering past my door; the house-door was pulled to with a bang. "That is Coppelius," I cried, terror-struck, and leapt out of bed. Then I heard a wild heart-rending scream; I rushed into my father's room; the door stood open, and clouds of suffocating smoke came rolling towards me. The servant-maid shouted, "Oh! my master! my master!" On the floor in front of the smoking hearth lay my father, dead, his face burned black and fearfully distorted, my sisters weeping and moaning around him, and my mother lying near them in a swoon. "Coppelius, you atrocious fiend, you've killed my father," I shouted. My senses left me. Two days later, when my father was placed in his coffin, his features were mild and gentle again as they had been when he was alive. I found great consolation in the thought that his association with the diabolical Coppelius could not have ended in his everlasting ruin.

Our neighbours had been awakened by the explosion; the affair got talked about, and came before the magistrate, who wished to cite Coppelius to clear himself. But he had disappeared from the place, leaving no traces behind him.

Now when I tell you, my dear friend, that the weather-glass hawker I spoke of was the villain Coppelius, you will not blame me for seeing impending mischief in his inauspicious reappearance. He was differently dressed; but Coppelius's figure and features are too deeply impressed upon my mind for me to be capable of making a mistake in the matter. Moreover, he has not even changed his name. He proclaims himself here, I learn, to be a Piedmontese mechanician, and styles himself Giuseppe Coppola.

I am resolved to enter the lists against him and revenge my father's death, let the consequences be what they may.

Don't say a word to mother about the reappearance of this odious monster. Give my love to my darling Clara; I will write to her when I am in a somewhat calmer frame of mind. Adieu, &c.

#### CLARA TO NATHANAEI

You are right, you have not written to me for a very long time, but nevertheless I believe that I still retain a place in your mind and thoughts. It is a proof that you were thinking a good deal about me when you were sending off your last letter to brother Lothair, for instead of directing it to him you directed it to me. With joy I tore open the envelope, and did not perceive the mistake until I read the words, "Oh! my dear, dear Lothair." Now I know I ought not to have read any more of the letter, but ought to have given it to my brother. But as you have so often in innocent raillery made it a sort of reproach against me that I possessed such a calm, and, for a woman, cool-headed temperament that I should be like the woman we read of—if the house was threatening to tumble down, I should before hastily fleeing, stop to smooth down a crumple in the window-curtains—I need hardly tell you that the beginning of your letter quite upset me. I could scarcely breathe; there was a bright mist before my eyes. Oh! my darling Nathanael! what could this terrible thing be that had happened? Separation from you—never to see you again, the thought was like a sharp

knife in my heart. I read on and on. Your description of that horrid Coppelius made my flesh creep. I now learnt for the first time what a terrible and violent death your good old father died. Brother Lothair, to whom I handed over his property, sought to comfort me, but with little success. That horrid weather-glass hawker Giuseppe Coppola followed me everywhere; and I am almost ashamed to confess it, but he was able to disturb my sound and in general calm sleep with all sorts of wonderful dream-shapes. But soon—the next day—I saw everything in a different light. Oh! do not be angry with me, my best-beloved, if, despite your strange presentiment that Coppelius will do you some mischief, Lothair tells you I am in quite as good spirits, and just the same as ever.

I will frankly confess, it seems to me that all that was fearsome and terrible of which you speak existed only in your own self, and that the real true outer world had but little to do with it. I can quite admit that old Coppelius may have been highly obnoxious to you children, but your real detestation of him arose from the fact that he hated children.

Naturally enough the gruesome Sand-man of the old nurse's story was associated in your childish mind with old Coppelius, who, even though you had not believed in the Sand-man, would have been to you a ghostly bugbear, especially dangerous to children. His mysterious labours along with your father at night-time were, I daresay, nothing more than secret experiments in alchemy, with which your mother could not be over well pleased, owing to the large sums of money that most likely were thrown away upon them; and besides, your father, his mind full of the deceptive striving after higher knowledge, may probably have become rather indifferent to his family, as so often happens in the case of such experimentalists. So also it is equally probable that your father brought about his death by his own imprudence, and that Coppelius is not to blame for it. I must tell you that yesterday I asked our experienced neighbour, the chemist, whether in experiments of this kind an explosion could take place which would have a momentarily fatal effect. He said, "Oh, certainly!" and described to me in his prolix and circumstantial way how it could be occasioned, mentioning at the same time so many strange and

funny words that I could not remember them at all. Now I know you will be angry at your Clara, and will say, "Of the Mysterious which often clasps man in its invisible arms there's not a ray can find its way into this cold heart. She sees only the varied surface of the things of the world, and, like the little child, is pleased with the golden glittering fruit, at the kernel of which lies the fatal poison."

Oh! my beloved Nathanael, do you believe then that the intuitive prescience of a dark power working within us to our own ruin cannot exist also in minds which are cheerful, natural, free from care? But please forgive me that I, a simple girl, presume in any way to indicate to you what I really think of such an inward strife. After all, I should not find the proper words, and you would only laugh at me, not because my thoughts were stupid, but because I was so foolish as to attempt to tell them to you.

If there is a dark and hostile power which traitorously fixes a thread in our hearts in order that, laying hold of it and drawing us by means of it along a dangerous road to ruin, which otherwise we should not have trod—if, I say, there is such a power, it must assume within us a form like ourselves, nay, it must be ourselves; for only in that way can we believe in it, and only so understood do we yield to it so far that it is able to accomplish its secret purpose. So long as we have sufficient firmness, fortified by cheerfulness, to always acknowledge foreign hostile influences for what they really are, whilst we quietly pursue the path pointed out to us by both inclination and calling, then this mysterious power perishes in its futile struggles to attain the form which is to be the reflected image of ourselves. It is also certain, Lothair adds, that if we have once voluntarily given ourselves up to this dark physical power, it often reproduces within us the strange forms which the outer world throws in our way, so that thus it is we ourselves who engender within ourselves the spirit which by some remarkable delusion we imagine to speak in that outer form. It is the phantom of our own self whose intimate relationship with, and whose powerful influence upon our soul either plunges us into hell or elevates us to heaven. Thus you will see, my beloved Nathanael, that I and brother Lothair have well talked over the subject of dark powers and forces; and now, after I have with some difficulty written down the principal results of our discussion, they seem to

me to contain many really profound thoughts. Lothair's last words, however, I don't quite understand altogether; I only dimly guess what he means; and yet I cannot help thinking it is all very true. I beg you, dear, strive to forget the ugly advocate Coppelius as well as the weather-glass hawker Giuseppe Coppola. Try and convince yourself that these foreign influences can have no power over you, that it is only the belief in their hostile power which can in reality make them dangerous to you. If every line of your letter did not betray the violent excitement of your mind, and if I did not sympathise with your condition from the bottom of my heart, I could in truth jest about the advocate Sand-man and weather-glass hawker Coppelius. Pluck up your spirits! Be cheerful! I have resolved to appear to you as your guardian-angel if that ugly man Coppola should dare take it into his head to bother you in your dreams, and drive him away with a good hearty laugh. I'm not afraid of him and his nasty hands, not the least little bit; I won't let him either as advocate spoil any dainty tit-bit I've taken, or as Sand-man rob me of my eyes.

My darling, darling Nathanael,  
Eternally your, &c. &c.

#### NATHANAEL TO LOTHAIK

I am very sorry that Clara opened and read my last letter to you; of course the mistake is to be attributed to my own absence of mind. She has written me a very deep philosophical letter, proving conclusively that Coppelius and Coppola only exist in my own mind and are phantoms of my own self, which will at once be dissipated, as soon as I look upon them in that light. In very truth one can hardly believe that the mind which so often sparkles in those bright, beautifully smiling, childlike eyes of hers like a sweet lovely dream could draw such subtle and scholastic distinctions. She also mentions your name. You have been talking about me. I suppose you have been giving her lectures, since she sifts and refines everything so acutely. But enough of this! I must now tell you it is most certain that the weather-glass hawker Giuseppe Coppola is not the advocate Coppelius. I am attending the lectures of our recently appointed Professor of Physics, who, like the distinguished naturalist, is called Spalanzani, and is of Italian origin.



He has known Coppola for many years; and it is also easy to tell from his accent that he really is a Piedmontese. Coppelius was a German, though no honest German, I fancy. Nevertheless I am not quite satisfied. You and Clara will perhaps take me for a gloomy dreamer, but nohow can I get rid of the impression which Coppelius's cursed face made upon me. I am glad to learn from Spalanzani that he has left the town. This Professor Spalanzani is a very queer fish. He is a little fat man, with prominent cheek-bones, thin nose, projecting lips, and small piercing eyes. You cannot get a better picture of him than by turning over one of the Berlin pocket-almanacs and looking at Cagliostro's portrait engraved by Chodowiecki; Spalanzani looks just like him.

Once lately, as I went up the steps to his house, I perceived that beside the curtain which generally covered a glass door there was a small chink. What it was that excited my curiosity I cannot explain; but I looked through. In the room I saw a female, tall, very slender, but of perfect proportions, and splendidly dressed, sitting at a little table, on which she had placed both her arms, her hands being folded together. She sat opposite the door, so that I could easily see her angelically beautiful face. She did not appear to notice me, and there was moreover a strangely fixed look about her eyes, I might almost say they appeared as if they had no power of vision; I thought she was sleeping with her eyes open. I felt quite uncomfortable, and so I slipped away quietly into the Professor's lecture-room, which was close at hand. Afterwards I learnt that the figure which I had seen was Spalanzani's daughter, Olimpia, whom he keeps locked in a most wicked and unaccountable way, and no man is ever allowed to come near her. Perhaps, however, there is after all something peculiar about her; perhaps she's an idiot or something of that sort. But why am I telling you all this? I could have told you it all better and more in detail when I see you. For in a fortnight I shall be amongst you. I must see my dear sweet angel, my Clara, again. Then the little bit of ill-temper, which, I must confess, took possession of me after her fearfully sensible letter, will be blown away. And that is the reason why I am not writing to her as well to-day. With all best wishes, etc.

Nothing more strange and extraordinary can be imagined, gracious reader, than what happened to my poor friend, the young student Nathanael, and which I have undertaken to relate to you. Have you ever lived to experience anything that completely took possession of your heart and mind and thoughts to the utter exclusion of everything else? All was seething and boiling within you; your blood, heated to fever pitch, leapt through your veins and inflamed your cheeks. Your gaze was so peculiar, as if seeking to grasp in empty space forms not seen of any other eye, and all your words ended in sighs betokening some mystery. Then your friends asked you, "What is the matter with you, my dear friend? What do you see?" And, wishing to describe the inner pictures in all their vivid colours, with their lights and their shades, you in vain struggled to find words with which to express yourself. But you felt as if you must gather up all the events that had happened, wonderful, splendid, terrible, jocose, and awful, in the very first word, so that the whole might be revealed by a single electric discharge, so to speak. Yet every word and all that partook of the nature of communication by intelligible sounds seemed to be colourless, cold, and dead. Then you try and try again, and stutter and stammer, whilst your friends' prosy questions strike like icy winds upon your heart's hot fire until they extinguish it. But if, like a bold painter, you had first sketched in a few audacious strokes the outline of the picture you had in your soul, you would then easily have been able to deepen and intensify the colours one after the other, until the varied throng of living figures carried your friends away, and they, like you, saw themselves in the midst of the scene that had proceeded out of your own soul.

Strictly speaking, indulgent reader, I must indeed confess to you, nobody has asked me for the history of young Nathanael; but you are very well aware that I belong to that remarkable class of authors who, when they are bearing anything about in their minds in the manner I have just described, feel as if everybody who comes near them, and also the whole world to boot, were asking, "Oh! What is it? Oh! do tell us, my good sir?" Hence I was most powerfully impelled to narrate to you Nathanael's ominous life. My soul was full of the elements of wonder and extraordinary peculiarity in it; but, for this very reason, and because it was necessary in the very begin-

ning to dispose you, indulgent reader, to bear with what is fantastic—and that is not a little thing—I racked my brain to find a way of commencing the story in a significant and original manner, calculated to arrest your attention. To begin with “Once upon a time,” the best beginning for a story, seemed to me too tame; with “In the small country town S—— lived,” rather better, at any rate allowing plenty of room to work up to the climax; or to plunge at once in medias res, “‘Go to the devil!’ cried the student Nathanael, his eyes blazing wildly with rage and fear, when the weather-glass hawker Giuseppe Coppola”—well, that is what I really had written, when I thought I detected something of the ridiculous in Nathanael’s wild glance; and the history is anything but laughable. I could not find any words which seemed fitted to reflect in even the feeblest degree the brightness of the colours of my mental vision. I determined not to begin at all. So I pray you, gracious reader, accept the three letters which my friend Lothair has been so kind as to communicate to me as the outline of the picture, into which I will endeavour to introduce more and more colour as I proceed with my narrative. Perhaps, like a good portrait-painter, I may succeed in depicting more than one figure in such wise that you will recognise it as a good likeness without being acquainted with the original, and feel as if you had very often seen the original with your own bodily eyes. Perhaps, too, you will then believe that nothing is more wonderful, nothing more fantastic than real life, and that all that a writer can do is to present it as a dark reflection from a dim cut mirror.

In order to make the very commencement more intelligible, it is necessary to add to the letters that, soon after the death of Nathanael’s father, Clara and Lothair, the children of a distant relative, who had likewise died, leaving them orphans, were taken by Nathanael’s mother into her own house. Clara and Nathanael conceived a warm affection for each other, against which not the slightest objection in the world could be urged. When therefore Nathanael left home to prosecute his studies in G——, they were betrothed. It is from G—— that his last letter is written, where he is attending the lectures of Spalanzani, the distinguished Professor of Physics.

I might now proceed comfortably with my narration, did not at

this moment Clara's image rise up so vividly before my eyes that I cannot turn them away from it, just as I never could when she looked upon me and smiled so sweetly. Nowhere would she have passed for beautiful; that was the unanimous opinion of all who professed to have any technical knowledge of beauty. But whilst architects praised the pure proportions of her figure and form, painters averred that her neck, shoulders, and bosom were almost too chastely modelled, and yet, on the other hand, one and all were in love with her glorious Magdalene hair, and talked a good deal of nonsense about Battoni-like colouring. One of them, a veritable romanticist, strangely enough likened her eyes to a lake by Ruisdael, in which is reflected the pure azure of the cloudless sky, the beauty of woods and flowers, and all the bright and varied life of a living landscape. Poets and musicians went still further and said, "What's all this talk about seas and reflections? How can we look upon the girl without feeling that wonderful heavenly songs and melodies beam upon us from her eyes, penetrating deep down into our hearts, till all becomes awake and throbbing with emotion? And if we cannot sing anything at all passable then, why, we are not worth much; and this we can also plainly read in the rare smile which flits around her lips when we have the hardihood to squeak out something in her presence which we pretend to call singing, in spite of the fact that it is nothing more than a few single notes confusedly linked together." And it really was so. Clara had the powerful fancy of a bright, innocent, unaffected child, a woman's deep and sympathetic heart, and an understanding clear, sharp, and discriminating. Dreamers and visionaries had but a bad time of it with her; for without saying very much—she was not by nature of a takative disposition—she plainly asked, by her calm steady look, and rare ironical smile, "How can you imagine, my dear friends, that I can take these fleeting shadowy images for true living and breathing forms?" For this reason many found fault with her as being cold, prosaic, and devoid of feeling; others, however, who had reached a clearer and deeper conception of life, were extremely fond of the intelligent, childlike, large-hearted girl. But none had such an affection for her as Nathanael, who was a zealous and cheerful cultivator of the fields of science and art. Clara clung to her lover with all her heart; the first clouds

she encountered in life were when he had to separate from her. With what delight did she fly into his arms when, as he had promised in his letter to Lothair, he really came back to his native town and entered his mother's room! And as Nathanael had foreseen, the moment he saw Clara again he no longer thought about either the advocate Coppelius or her sensible letter; his ill-humour had quite disappeared.

Nevertheless Nathanael was right when he told his friend Lothair that the repulsive vendor of weather-glasses, Coppola, had exercised a fatal and disturbing influence upon his life. It was quite patent to all; for even during the first few days he showed that he was completely and entirely changed. He gave himself up to gloomy reveries, and moreover acted so strangely; they had never observed anything at all like it in him before. Everything, even his own life, was to him but dreams and presentiments. His constant theme was that every man who delusively imagined himself to be free was merely the plaything of the cruel sport of mysterious powers, and it was vain for man to resist them; he must humbly submit to whatever destiny had decreed for him. He went so far as to maintain that it was foolish to believe that a man could do anything in art or science of his own accord; for the inspiration in which alone any true artistic work could be done did not proceed from the spirit within outwards, but was the result of the operation directed inwards of some Higher Principle existing without and beyond ourselves.

This mystic extravagance was in the highest degree repugnant to Clara's clear intelligent mind, but it seemed vain to enter upon any attempt at refutation. Yet when Nathanael went on to prove that Coppelius was the Evil Principle which had entered into him and taken possession of him at the time he was listening behind the curtain, and that this hateful demon would in some terrible way ruin their happiness, then Clara grew grave and said, "Yes, Nathanael. You are right; Coppelius is an Evil Principle; he can do dreadful things, as bad as could a Satanic power which should assume a living physical form, but only—only if you do not banish him from your mind and thoughts. So long as you believe in him he exists and is at work; your belief in him is his only power." Whereupon Nathanael, quite angry because Clara would only grant

the existence of the demon in his own mind, began to dilate at large upon the whole mystic doctrine of devils and awful powers, but Clara abruptly broke off the theme by making, to Nathanael's very great disgust, some quite commonplace remark. Such deep mysteries are sealed books to cold, unsusceptible characters, he thought, without being clearly conscious to himself that he counted Clara amongst these inferior natures, and accordingly he did not remit his efforts to initiate her into these mysteries. In the morning, when she was helping to prepare breakfast, he would take his stand beside her, and read all sorts of mystic books to her, until she begged him—"But, my dear Nathanael, I shall have to scold you as the Evil Principle which exercises a fatal influence upon my coffee. For if I do as you wish, and let things go their own way, and look into your eyes whilst you read, the coffee will all boil over into the fire, and you will none of you get any breakfast." Then Nathanael hastily banged the book to and ran away in great displeasure to his own room.

Formerly he had possessed a peculiar talent for writing pleasing, sparkling tales, which Clara took the greatest delight in listening to; but now his productions were gloomy, unintelligible, and wanting in form, so that, although Clara out of forbearance towards him did not say so, he nevertheless felt how very little interest she took in them. There was nothing that Clara disliked so much as what was tedious; at such times her intellectual sleepiness was not to be overcome; it was betrayed both in her glances and in her words. Nathanael's effusions were, in truth, exceedingly tedious. His ill-humour at Clara's cold, prosaic temperament continued to increase; Clara could not conceal her distaste of his dark, gloomy, wearying mysticism; and thus both began to be more and more estranged from each other without exactly being aware of it themselves. The image of the ugly Coppelius had, as Nathanael was obliged to confess to himself, faded considerably in his fancy, and it often cost him great pains to present him in vivid colours in his literary efforts, in which he played the part of the ghoul of Destiny. At length it entered into his head to make his dismal presentiment that Coppelius would ruin his happiness the subject of a poem. He made himself and Clara, united by true love, the central figures, but represented a black hand as being from time to

time thrust into their life and plucking out a joy that had blossomed for them. At length, as they were standing at the altar, the terrible Coppelius appeared and touched Clara's lovely eyes, which leapt into Nathanael's own bosom, burning and hissing like bloody sparks. Then Coppelius laid hold upon him, and hurled him into a blazing circle of fire, which spun round with the speed of a whirlwind, and, storming and blustering, dashed away with him. The fearful noise it made was like a furious hurricane lashing the foaming sea-waves until they rise up like black, white-headed giants in the midst of the raging struggle. But through the midst of the savage fury of the tempest he heard Clara's voice calling, "Can you not see me, dear? Coppelius has deceived you; they were not my eyes which burned so in your bosom; they were fiery drops of your own heart's blood. Look at me, I have got my own eyes still." Nathanael thought, "Yes, that is Clara, and I am hers for ever." Then this thought laid a powerful grasp upon the fiery circle so that it stood still, and the riotous turmoil died away rumbling down a dark abyss. Nathanael looked into Clara's eyes; but it was death whose gaze rested so kindly upon him.

Whilst Nathanael was writing this work he was very quiet and sober-minded; he filed and polished every line, and as he had chosen to submit himself to the limitations of metre, he did not rest until all was pure and musical. When, however, he had at length finished it and read it aloud to himself he was seized with horror and awful dread, and he screamed, "Whose hideous voice is this?" But he soon came to see in it again nothing beyond a very successful poem, and he confidently believed it would enkindle Clara's cold temperament, though to what end she should be thus aroused was not quite clear to his own mind, nor yet what would be the real purpose served by tormenting her with these dreadful pictures, which prophesied a terrible and ruinous end to her affection.

Nathanael and Clara sat in his mother's little garden. Clara was bright and cheerful, since for three entire days her lover, who had been busy writing his poem, had not teased her with his dreams or forebodings. Nathanael, too, spoke in a gay and vivacious way of things of merry import, as he formerly used to do, so that Clara said, "Ah! now I have you again. We have driven away that ugly

Coppelius, you see." Then it suddenly occurred to him that he had got the poems in his pocket which he wished to read to her. He at once took out the manuscript and began to read. Clara, anticipating something tedious as usual, prepared to submit to the infliction, and calmly resumed her knitting. But as the sombre clouds rose up darker and darker she let her knitting fall on her lap and sat with her eyes fixed in a set stare upon Nathanael's face. He was quite carried away by his own work, the fire of enthusiasm coloured his cheeks a deep red, and tears started from his eyes. At length he concluded, groaning and showing great lassitude; grasping Clara's hand, he sighed as if he were being utterly melted in inconsolable grief, "Oh, Clara! Clara!" She drew him softly to her heart and said in a low but very grave and impressive tone, "Nathanael, my darling Nathanael, throw that foolish, senseless, stupid thing into the fire." Then Nathanael leapt indignantly to his feet, crying, as he pushed Clara from him, "You damned lifeless automaton!" and rushed away. Clara was cut to the heart, and wept bitterly. "Oh! he has never loved me, for he does not understand me," she sobbed.

Lothair entered the arbour. Clara was obliged to tell him all that had taken place. He was passionately fond of his sister and every word of her complaint fell like a spark upon his heart, so that the displeasure which he had long entertained against his dreamy friend Nathanael was kindled into furious anger. He hastened to find Nathanael, and upbraided him in harsh words for his irrational behaviour towards his beloved sister. The fiery Nathanael answered him in the same style. "A fantastic, crack-brained fool," was retaliated with, "A miserable, common, everyday sort of fellow." A meeting was the inevitable consequence. They agreed to meet on the following morning behind the garden-wall, and fight, according to the custom of the students of the place, with sharp rapiers. They went about silent and gloomy; Clara had both heard and seen the violent quarrel, and also observed the fencing-master bring the rapiers in the dusk of the evening. She had a presentiment of what was to happen. They both appeared at the appointed place wrapped up in the same gloomy silence, and threw off their coats. Their eyes flaming with the bloodthirsty light of pugnacity, they were about to begin their contest when Clara burst through



the garden door. Sobbing, she screamed, "You savage, terrible men! Cut me down before you attack each other; for how can I live when my lover has slain my brother, or my brother slain my lover?" Lothair let his weapon fall and gazed silently upon the ground, whilst Nathanael's heart was rent with sorrow, and all the affection which he had felt for his lovely Clara in the happiest days of her golden youth was awakened within him. His murderous weapon, too, fell from his hand; he threw himself at Clara's feet. "Oh! can you ever forgive me, my only, my dearly loved Clara? Can you, my dear brother Lothair, also forgive me?" Lothair was touched by his friend's great distress; the three young people embraced each other amidst endless tears, and swore never again to break their bond of love and fidelity.

Nathanael felt as if a heavy burden that had been weighing him down to the earth was now rolled from off him, nay, as if by offering resistance to the dark power which had possessed him, he had rescued his own self from the ruin which had threatened him. Three happy days he now spent amidst the loved ones, and then returned to G——, where he had still a year to stay before settling down in his native town for life.

Everything having reference to Coppelius had been concealed from the mother, for they knew she could not think of him without horror, since she as well as Nathanael believed him to be guilty of causing her husband's death.

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When Nathanael came to the house where he lived he was greatly astonished to find it burnt down to the ground, so that nothing but the bare outer walls were left standing amidst a heap of ruins. Although the fire had broken out in the laboratory of the chemist who lived on the ground-floor, and had therefore spread upwards, some of Nathanael's bold, active friends had succeeded in time in forcing a way into his room in the upper storey and saving his books and manuscripts and instruments. They had carried them all uninjured into another house, where they engaged a room for him; this he now at once took possession of. That he lived opposite Professor Spalanzani did not strike him particularly, nor did it occur to him as anything more singular that he could, as he ob-

served, by looking out of his window, see straight into the room where Olympia often sat alone. Her figure he could plainly distinguish, although her features were uncertain and confused. It did at length occur to him, however, that she remained for hours together in the same position in which he had first discovered her through the glass door, sitting at a little table without any occupation whatever, and it was evident that she was constantly gazing across in his direction. He could not but confess to himself that he had never seen a finer figure. However, with Clara mistress of his heart, he remained perfectly unaffected by Olympia's stiffness and apathy; and it was only occasionally that he sent a fugitive glance over his compendium across to her—that was all.

He was writing to Clara; a light tap came at the door. At his summons to "Come in," Coppola's repulsive face appeared peeping in. Nathanael felt his heart beat with trepidation; but, recollecting what Spalanzani had told him about his fellow-countryman Coppola, and what he had himself so faithfully promised his beloved in respect to the Sand-man Coppelius, he was ashamed at himself for this childish fear of spectres. Accordingly, he controlled himself with an effort, and said, as quietly and as calmly as he possibly could, "I don't want to buy any weather-glasses, my good friend; you had better go elsewhere." Then Coppola came right into the room, and said in a hoarse voice, screwing up his wide mouth into a hideous smile, whilst his little eyes flashed keenly from beneath his long grey eyelashes, "What! Nee weather-gless? Nee weather-gless? 've got foine oyes as well—foine oyes!" Affrighted, Nathanael cried, "You stupid man how can you have eyes?—eyes—eyes?" But Coppola, laying aside his weather-glasses, thrust his hands into his big coat-pockets and brought out several spy-glasses and spectacles, and put them on the table. "Theer! Theer! Spect'cles! Spect'cles to put 'n nose! Them's my oyes—foine oyes." And he continued to produce more and more spectacles from his pockets until the table began to gleam and flash all over. Thousands of eyes were looking and blinking convulsively, and staring up at Nathanael; he could not avert his gaze from the table. Coppola went on heaping up his spectacles, whilst wilder and ever wilder burning flashes crossed through and through each other and darted their bloodred rays into Nathanael's breast. Quite

overcome, and frantic with terror, he shouted, "Stop! stop! you terrible man!" and he seized Coppola by the arm, which he had again thrust into his pocket in order to bring out still more spectacles, although the whole table was covered all over with them. With a harsh disagreeable laugh Coppola gently freed himself; and with the words "So! went none! Well, here foine gless!" he swept all his spectacles together, and put them back into his coat-pockets, whilst from a breast-pocket he produced a great number of larger and smaller perspectives. As soon as the spectacles were gone Nathanael recovered his equanimity again; and, bending his thoughts upon Clara, he clearly discerned that the gruesome incubus had proceeded only from himself, as also that Coppola was a right honest mechanician and optician, and far from being Coppolius's dreaded double and ghost. And then, besides, none of the glasses which Coppola now placed on the table had anything at all singular about them, at least nothing so weird as the spectacles; so, in order to square accounts with himself, Nathanael now really determined to buy something of the man. He took up a small, very beautifully cut pocket perspective, and by way of proving it looked through the window. Never before in his life had he had a glass in his hands that brought out things so clearly and sharply and distinctly. Involuntarily he directed the glass upon Spalanzani's room; Olimpia sat at the little table as usual, her arms laid upon it and her hands folded. Now he saw for the first time the regular and exquisite beauty of her features. The eyes, however, seemed to him to have a singular look of fixity and lifelessness. But as he continued to look closer and more carefully through the glass he fancied a light like humid moonbeams came into them. It seemed as if their power of vision was now being enkindled; their glances shone with ever-increasing vivacity. Nathanael remained standing at the window as if glued to the spot by a wizard's spell, his gaze riveted unchangeably upon the divinely beautiful Olimpia. A coughing and shuffling of the feet awakened him out of his enchaining dream, as it were. Coppola stood behind him, "Tre zechini" (three ducats). Nathanael had completely forgotten the optician; he hastily paid the sum demanded. "Ain't it? Foine gless? foine gless?" asked Coppola in his harsh unpleasant voice, smiling sardonically. "Yes, yes, yes," rejoined Nathanael impa-

tiently; "adieu, my good friend." But Coppola did not leave the room without casting many peculiar side-glances upon Nathanael; and the young student heard him laughing loudly on the stairs. "Ah well!" thought he, "he's laughing at me because I've paid him too much for this little perspective—because I've given him too much money—that's it." As he softly murmured these words he fancied he detected a gasping sigh as of a dying man stealing awfully through the room; his heart stopped beating with fear. But to be sure he had heaved a deep sigh himself; it was quite plain. "Clara is quite right," said he to himself, "in holding me to be an incurable ghost-seer; and yet it's very ridiculous—ay, more than ridiculous, that the stupid thought of having paid Coppola too much for his glass should cause me this strange anxiety; I can't see any reason for it."

Now he sat down to finish his letter to Clara; but a glance through the window showed him Olimpia still in her former posture. Urged by an irresistible impulse he jumped up and seized Coppola's perspective; nor could he tear himself away from the fascinating Olimpia until his friend and brother Siegmund called for him to go to Professor Spalanzani's lecture. The curtains before the door of the all-important room were closely drawn, so that he could not see Olimpia. Nor could he even see her from his own room during the two following days, notwithstanding that he scarcely ever left his window, and maintained a scarce interrupted watch through Coppola's perspective upon her room. On the third day curtains even were drawn across the window. Plunged into the depths of despair,—goaded by longing and ardent desire, he hurried outside the walls of the town. Olimpia's image hovered about his path in the air and stepped forth out of the bushes, and peeped up at him with large and lustrous eyes from the bright surface of the brook. Clara's image was completely faded from his mind; he had no thoughts except for Olimpia. He uttered his love-plaints aloud and in a lachrymose tone, "Oh! my glorious, noble star of love, have you only risen to vanish again, and leave me in the darkness and hopelessness of night?"

Returning home, he became aware that there was a good deal of noisy bustle going on in Spalanzani's house. All the doors stood wide open; men were taking in all kinds of gear and furniture; the

windows of the first floor were all lifted off their hinges; busy maid-servants with immense hair-brooms were driving backwards and forwards dusting and sweeping, whilst within could be heard the knocking and hammering of carpenters and upholstciers. Utterly astonished, Nathanael stood still in the street; then Siegmund joined him, laughing, and said, "Well, what do you say to our old Spalanzani?" Nathanael assured him that he could not say anything, since he knew not what it all meant; to his great astonishment, he could hear, however, that they were turning the quiet gloomy house almost inside out with their dusting and cleaning and making of alterations. Then he learned from Siegmund that Spalanzani intended giving a great concert and ball on the following day, and that half the university was invited. It was generally reported that Spalanzani was going to let his daughter Olimpia, whom he had so long so jealously guarded from every eye, make her first appearance.

Nathanael received an invitation. At the appointed hour, when the carriages were rolling up and the lights were gleaming brightly in the decorated halls, he went across to the Professor's, his heart beating high with expectation. The company was both numerous and brilliant. Olimpia was richly and tastefully dressed. One could not but admire her figure and the regular beauty of her features. The striking inward curve of her back, as well as the wasp-like smallness of her waist, appeared to be the result of too-tight lacing. There was something stiff and measured in her gait and bearing that made an unfavourable impression upon many; it was ascribed to the constraint imposed upon her by the company. The concert began. Olimpia played on the piano with great skill; and sang as skilfully an aria di bravura, in a voice which was, if anything, almost too sharp, but clear as glass bells. Nathanael was transported with delight; he stood in the background farthest from her, and owing to the blinding lights could not quite distinguish her features. So, without being observed, he took Coppola's glass out of his pocket, and directed it upon the beautiful Olimpia. Oh! then he perceived how her yearning eyes sought him, how every note only reached its full purity in the loving glance which penetrated to and inflamed his heart. Her artificial roulades seemed to him to be the exultant cry towards heaven of the soul refined by love; and

when at last, after the cadenza, the long trill rang shrilly and loudly through the hall, he felt as if he were suddenly grasped by burning arms and could no longer control himself,—he could not help shouting aloud in his mingled pain and delight, "Olimpia!" All eyes were turned upon him; many people laughed. The face of the cathedral organist wore a still more gloomy look than it had done before, but all he said was, "Very well!"

The concert came to an end, and the ball began. Oh! to dance with her—with her—that was now the aim of all Nathanael's wishes, of all his desires. But how should he have courage to request her, the queen of the ball, to grant him the honour of a dance? And yet he couldn't tell how it came about, just as the dance began, he found himself standing close beside her, nobody having as yet asked her to be his partner; so, with some difficulty stammering out a few words, he grasped her hand. It was cold as ice; he shook with an awful, frosty shiver. But, fixing his eyes upon her face, he saw that her glance was beaming upon him with love and longing, and at the same moment he thought that the pulse began to beat in her cold hand, and the warm life-blood to course through her veins. And passion burned more intensely in his own heart also; he threw his arm round her beautiful waist and whirled her round the hall. He had always thought that he kept good and accurate time in dancing, but from the perfectly rhythmical evenness with which Olimpia danced, and which frequently put him quite out, he perceived how very faulty his own time really was. Notwithstanding, he would not dance with any other lady; and everybody else who approached Olimpia to call upon her for a dance, he would have liked to kill on the spot. This, however, only happened twice; to his astonishment Olimpia remained after this without a partner, and he failed not on each occasion to take her out again. If Nathanael had been able to see anything else except the beautiful Olimpia, there would inevitably have been a good deal of unpleasant quarrelling and strife; for it was evident that Olimpia was the object of the smothered laughter only with difficulty suppressed, which was heard in various corners amongst the young people; and they followed her with very curious looks, but nobody knew for what reason. Nathanael, excited by dancing and the plentiful supply of wine he had consumed, had laid aside the

shyness which at other times characterised him. He sat beside Olimpia, her hand in his own, and declared his love enthusiastically and passionately in words which neither of them understood, neither he nor Olimpia. And yet she perhaps did, for she sat with her eyes fixed unchangeably upon his, sighing repeatedly, "Ach! Ach! Ach!" Upon this Nathanael would answer, "Oh, you glorious heavenly lady! You lay from the promised paradise of love! Oh! what a profound soul you have! my whole being is mirrored in it!" and a good deal more in the same strain. But Olimpia only continued to sigh "Ach! Ach!" again and again.

Professor Spalanzani passed by the two happy lovers once or twice, and smiled with a look of peculiar satisfaction. All at once it seemed to Nathanael, albeit he was far away in a different world, as if it were growing perceptibly darker down below at Professor Spalanzani's. He looked about him, and to his very great alarm became aware that there were only two lights left burning in the hall, and they were on the point of going out. The music and dancing had long ago ceased. "We must part—part!" he cried, wildly and despairingly; he kissed Olimpia's hand; he bent down to her mouth, but ice-cold lips met his burning ones. As he touched her cold hand, he felt his heart thrilled with awe; the legend of "The Dead Bride" shot suddenly through his mind. But Olimpia had drawn him closer to her, and the kiss appeared to warm her lips into vitality. Professor Spalanzani strode slowly through the empty apartment, his footsteps giving a hollow echo; and his figure had, as the flickering shadows played about him, a ghostly, awful appearance. "Do you love me? Do you love me, Olimpia? Only one little word—Do you love me?" whispered Nathanael, but she only sighed, "Ach! Ach!" as she rose to her feet. "Yes, you are my lovely, glorious star of love," said Nathanael, "and will shine for ever, purifying and ennobling my heart." "Ach! Ach!" replied Olimpia, as she moved along. Nathanael followed her; they stood before the Professor. "You have had an extraordinarily animated conversation with my daughter," said he, smiling; "well, well, my dear Mr. Nathanael, if you find pleasure in talking to the stupid girl, I am sure I shall be glad for you to come and do so." Nathanael took his leave, his heart singing and leaping in a perfect delirium of happiness.

During the next few days Spalanzani's ball was the general topic of conversation. Although the Professor had done everything to make the thing a splendid success, yet certain gay spirits related more than one thing that had occurred which was quite irregular and out of order. They were especially keen in pulling Olimpia to pieces for her taciturnity and rigid stiffness; in spite of her beautiful form they alleged that she was hopelessly stupid, and in this fact they discerned the reason why Spalanzani had so long kept her concealed from publicity. Nathanael heard all this with inward wrath, but nevertheless he held his tongue; for, thought he, would it indeed be worth while to prove to these fellows that it is their own stupidity which prevents them from appreciating Olimpia's profound and brilliant parts? One day Siegmund said to him, "Pray, brother, have the kindness to tell me how you, a sensible fellow, came to lose your head over that Miss Wax-face—that wooden doll across there?" Nathanael was about to fly into a rage, but he recollected himself and replied, "Tell me, Siegmund, how came it that Olimpia's divine charms could escape your eye, so keenly alive as it always is to beauty, and your acute perception as well? But Heaven be thanked for it, otherwise, I should have had you for a rival, and then the blood of one of us would have had to be spilled." Siegmund, perceiving how matters stood with his friend, skilfully interposed and said, after remarking that all argument with one in love about the object of his affections was out of place, "Yet it's very strange that several of us have formed pretty much the same opinion about Olimpia. We think she is—you won't take it ill, brother?—that she is singularly statuesque and soulless. Her figure is regular, and so are her features, that can't be gainsaid; and if her eyes were not so utterly devoid of life, I may say, of the power of vision, she might pass for a beauty. She is strangely measured in her movements, they all seem as if they were dependent upon some wound up clock-work. Her playing and singing has the disagreeably perfect, but insensitive time of a singing machine and her dancing is the same. We felt quite afraid of this Olimpia, and did not like to have anything to do with her; she seemed to us to be only acting like a living creature, and as if there was some secret at the bottom of it all." Nathanael did not give way to the bitter feelings which threatened to master him at



these words of Siegmund's; he fought down and got the better of his displeasure, and merely said, very earnestly, "You cold prosaic fellows may very well be afraid of her. It is only to its like that the poetically organised spirit unfolds itself. Upon me alone did her loving glances fall, and through my mind and thoughts alone did they radiate; and only in her love can I find my own self again. Perhaps, however, she doesn't do quite right not to jabber a lot of nonsense and stupid talk like other shallow people. It is true, she speaks but few words; but the few words she does speak are genuine hieroglyphs of the inner world of Love and of the higher cognition of the intellectual life revealed in the intuition of the Eternal beyond the grave. But you have no understanding for all these things, and I am only wasting words." "God be with you, brother," said Siegmund very gently, almost sadly, "but it seems to me that you are in a very bad way. You may rely upon me, if all—No, I can't say any more." It all at once dawned upon Nathanael that his cold prosaic friend Siegmund really and sincerely wished him well, and so he warmly shook his proffered hand.

Nathanael had completely forgotten that there was a Clara in the world, whom he had once loved—and his mother and Lothair. They had all vanished from his mind; he lived for Olympia alone. He sat beside her every day for hours together, rhapsodising about his love and sympathy enkindled into life, and about psychic elective affinity—all of which Olympia listened to with great reverence. He fished up from the very bottom of his desk all the things that he had ever written—poems, fancy sketches, visions, romances, tales, and the heap was increased daily with all kinds of aimless sonnets, stanzas, canzonets. All these he read to Olympia hour after hour without growing tired; but then he had never had such an exemplary listener. She neither embroidered, nor knitted; she did not look out of the window, or feed a bird, or play with a little pet dog or a favourite cat, neither did she twist a piece of paper or anything of that kind round her finger; she did not forcibly convert a yawn into a low affected cough—in short, she sat hour after hour with her eyes bent unchangeably upon her lover's face, without moving or altering her position, and her gaze grew more ardent and more ardent still. And it was only when at last Nathanael rose and kissed her lips or her hand that she said, "Ach! Ach!" and then "Good-

night, dear." Arrived in his own room, Nathanael would break out with, "Oh! what a brilliant—what a profound mind! Only you—you alone understand me." And his heart trembled with rapture when he reflected upon the wondrous harmony which daily revealed itself between his own and his Olimpia's character; for he fancied that she had expressed in respect to his works and his poetic genius the identical sentiments which he himself cherished deep down in his own heart in respect to the same, and even as if it was his own heart's voice speaking to him. And it must indeed have been so; for Olimpia never uttered any other words than those already mentioned. And when Nathanael himself in his clear and sober moments, as, for instance, directly after waking in a morning, thought about her utter passivity and taciturnity, he only said, "What are words—but words? The glance of her heavenly eyes says more than any tongue of earth. And how can, anyway, a child of heaven accustom herself to the narrow circle which the exigencies of a wretched mundane life demand?"

Professor Spalanzani appeared to be greatly pleased at the intimacy that had sprung up between his daughter Olimpia and Nathanael, and showed the young man many unmistakable proofs of his good feeling towards him; and when Nathanael ventured at length to hint very delicately at an alliance with Olimpia, the Professor smiled all over his face at once, and said he should allow his daughter to make a perfectly free choice. Encouraged by these words, and with the fire of desire burning in his heart, Nathanael resolved the very next day to implore Olimpia to tell him frankly, in plain words, what he had long read in her sweet loving glances,—that she would be his forever. He looked for the ring which his mother had given him at parting; he would present it to Olimpia as a symbol of his devotion, and of the happy life he was to lead with her from that time onwards. Whilst looking for it he came across his letters from Clara and Lothair; he threw them carelessly aside, found the ring, put it in his pocket, and ran across to Olimpia. Whilst still on the stairs, in the entrance-passage, he heard an extraordinary hubbub; the noise seemed to proceed from Spalanzani's study. There was a stamping—a rattling—pushing—knocking against the door, with curses and oaths intermingled. "Leave hold—leave hold—you monster—you rascal—staked your

life and honour upon it?—Ha! ha! ha! ha!—That was not our wager—I, I made the eyes—I the clock-work.—Go to the devil with your clock work—you damned dog of a watch-maker—be off—Satan—stop—you paltry turner—you infernal beast!—stop—begone—let me go.” The voices which were thus making all this racket and rumpus were those of Spalanzani and the fearsome Coppelius. Nathanael rushed in, impelled by some nameless dream. The Professor was grasping a female figure by the shoulders, the Italian Coppola held her by the feet; and they were pulling and dragging each other backwards and forwards, fighting furiously to get possession of her. Nathanael recoiled with horror on recognising that the figure was Olimpia. Boiling with rage, he was about to tear his beloved from the grasp of the madmen, when Coppola by an extraordinary exertion of strength twisted the figure out of the Professor’s hands and gave him such a terrible blow with her, that he reeled backwards and fell over the table all amongst the phials and retorts, the bottles and glass cylinders, which covered it: all these things were smashed into a thousand pieces. But Coppola threw the figure across his shoulder, and, laughing shrilly and horribly, ran hastily down the stairs, the figure’s ugly feet hanging down and banging and rattling like wood against the steps. Nathanael was stupefied;—he had seen only too distinctly that in Olimpia’s pallid waxen face there were no eyes, merely black holes in their stead; she was an inanimate puppet. Spalanzani was rolling on the floor; the pieces of glass had cut his head and breast and arm; the blood was escaping from him in streams. But he gathered his strength together by an effort.

“After him—after him! What do you stand staring there for? Coppelius—Coppelius—he’s stolen my best automaton—at which I’ve worked for twenty years—staked my life upon it—the clock-work—speech—movement—mine—your eyes—stolen your eyes—damn him—curse him—after him—fetch me back Olimpia—there are the eyes.” And now Nathanael saw a pair of bloody eyes lying on the floor staring at him; Spalanzani seized them with his uninjured hand and threw them at him, so that they hit his breast. Then madness dug her burning talons into him and swept down into his heart, rending his mind and thoughts to shreds. “Aha! aha! aha! Fire-wheel—fire-wheel! Spin round, fire-wheel! merrily, merrily!

aha! wooden doll! spin round, pretty wooden doll!" and he threw himself upon the Professor, clutching him fast by the throat. He would certainly have strangled him had not several people, attracted by the noise, rushed in and torn away the madman; and so they saved the Professor, whose wounds were immediately dressed. Siegmund, with all his strength, was not able to subdue the frantic lunatic, who continued to scream in a dreadful way, "Spin round, wooden doll!" and to strike out right and left with his doubled fists. At length the united strength of several succeeded in overpowering him by throwing him on the floor and binding him. His cries passed into a brutish bellow that was awful to hear; and thus raging with the harrowing violence of madness, he was taken away to the madhouse.

Before continuing my narration of what happened further to the unfortunate Nathanael, I will tell you, indulgent reader, in case you take any interest in that skilful mechanician and fabricator of automata, Spalanzani, that he recovered completely from his wounds. He had, however, to leave the university, for Nathanael's fate had created a great sensation; and the opinion was pretty generally expressed that it was an imposture altogether unpardonable to have smuggled a wooden puppet instead of a living person into intelligent tea-circles,—for Olimpia had been present at several with success. Lawyers called it a cunning piece of knavery, and all the harder to punish since it was directed against the public; and it had been so craftily contrived that it had escaped unobserved by all except a few preternaturally acute students, although everybody was very wise now and remembered to have thought of several facts which occurred to them as suspicious. But these latter could not succeed in making out any sort of a consistent tale. For was it, for instance, a thing likely to occur to any one as suspicious that, according to the declaration of an elegant beau of these tea-parties, Olimpia had, contrary to all good manners, sneezed oftener than she had yawned? The former must have been, in the opinion of this elegant gentleman, the winding up of the concealed clock-work; it had always been accompanied by an observable creaking, and so on. The Professor of Poetry and Eloquence took a pinch of snuff, and, slapping the lid to and clearing his throat, said solemnly, "My most honourable ladies and gentle-

men, don't you see then where the rub is? The whole thing is an allegory, a continuous metaphor. You understand me? *Sapienti sat.*" But several most honourable gentlemen did not rest satisfied with this explanation; the history of this automaton had sunk deeply into their souls, and an absurd mistrust of human figures began to prevail. Several lovers, in order to be fully convinced that they were not paying court to a wooden puppet, required that their mistress should sing and dance a little out of time, should embroider or knit or play with her little pug, &c., when being read to, but above all things else that she should do something more than merely listen—that she should frequently speak in such a way as to really show that her words presupposed as a condition some thinking and feeling. The bonds of love were in many cases drawn closer in consequence, and so of course became more engaging; in other instances they gradually relaxed and fell away. "I cannot really be made responsible for it," was the remark of more than one young gallant. At the tea-gatherings everybody, in order to ward off suspicion, yawned to an incredible extent and never sneezed. Spalanzani was obliged, as has been said, to leave the place in order to escape a criminal charge of having fraudulently imposed an automaton upon human society. Coppola, too, had also disappeared.

When Nathanael awoke he felt as if he had been oppressed by a terrible nightmare; he opened his eyes and experienced an indescribable sensation of mental comfort, whilst a soft and most beautiful sensation of warmth pervaded his body. He lay on his own bed in his own room at home; Clara was bending over him, and at a little distance stood his mother and Lothair. "At last, at last, O my darling Nathanael; now we have you again; now you are cured of your grievous illness, now you are mine again." And Clara's words came from the depths of her heart; and she clasped him in her arms. The bright scalding tears streamed from his eyes, he was so overcome with mingled feelings of sorrow and delight; and he gasped forth, "My Clara, my Clara!" Siegmund, who had staunchly stood by his friend in his hour of need, now came into the room. Nathanael gave him his hand—"My faithful brother, you have not deserted me." Every trace of insanity had left him, and in the tender hands of his mother and his beloved, and his friends, he quickly recovered his strength again. Good fortune

had in the meantime visited the house; a niggardly old uncle, from whom they had never expected to get anything, had died, and left Nathanael's mother not only a considerable fortune, but also a small estate, pleasantly situated not far from the town. There they resolved to go and live, Nathanael and his mother, and Clara, to whom he was now to be married, and Lothair. Nathanael was become gentler and more childlike than he had ever been before, and now began really to understand Clara's supremely pure and noble character. None of them ever reminded him, even in the remotest degree, of the past. But when Siegmund took leave of him, he said, "By heaven, brother! I was in a bad way, but an angel came just at the right moment and led me back upon the path of light. Yes, it was Clara." Siegmund would not let him speak further, fearing lest the painful recollections of the past might arise too vividly and too intensely in his mind.

The time came for the four happy people to move to their little property. At noon they were going through the streets. After making several purchases they found that the lofty tower of the town-house was throwing its giant shadows across the market-place. "Come," said Clara, "let us go up to the top once more and have a look at the distant hills." No sooner said than done. Both of them, Nathanael and Clara, went up the tower; their mother, however, went on with the servant-girl to her new home, and Lothair, not feeling inclined to climb up all the many steps, waited below. There the two lovers stood arm-in-arm on the topmost gallery of the tower, and gazed out into the sweet-scented wooded landscape, beyond which the blue hills rose up like a giant's city.

"Oh, do look at that strange little grey bush, it looks as if it were actually walking towards us," said Clara. Mechanically he put his hand into his side-pocket; he found Coppola's perspective and looked for the bush; Clara stood in front of the glass. Then a convulsive thrill shot through his pulse and veins; pale as a corpse, he fixed his staring eyes upon her; but soon they began to roll, and a fiery current flashed and sparkled in them, and he yelled fearfully, like a hunted animal. Leaping up high in the air and laughing horribly at the same time, he began to shout, in a piercing voice, "Spin round, wooden doll! Spin round, wooden doll!" With the strength of a giant he laid hold upon Clara and tried to hurl her over, but in an agony of despair she clutched fast hold of the

railing that went round the gallery. Lothair heard the madman raging and Clara's scream of terror: a fearful presentiment flashed across his mind. He ran up the steps; the door of the second flight was locked. Clara's scream for help rang out more loudly. Mad with rage and fear, he threw himself against the door, which at length gave way. Clara's cries were growing fainter and fainter,—“*Help! save me! save me!*” and her voice died away in the air. “*She is killed—murdered by that madman,*” shouted Lothair. The door to the gallery was also locked. Despair gave him the strength of a giant; he burst the door off its hinges. Good God! there was Clara in the grasp of the madman Nathanael, hanging over the gallery in the air; she only held to the iron bar with one hand. Quick as lightning, Lothair seized his sister and pulled her back, at the same time dealing the madman a blow in the face with his doubled fist, which sent him reeling backwards, forcing him to let go his victim.

Lothair ran down with his insensible sister in his arms. She was saved. But Nathanael ran round and round the gallery, leaping up in the air and shouting, “*Spin round, fire-wheel! Spin round, fire-wheel!*” The people heard the wild shouting, and a crowd began to gather. In the midst of them towered the advocate Coppelius, like a giant; he had only just arrived in the town, and had gone straight to the market-place. Some were going up to overpower and take charge of the madman, but Coppelius laughed and said, “*Ha! ha! wait a bit; he'll come down of his own accord;*” and he stood gazing upwards along with the rest. All at once Nathanael stopped as if spell-bound; he bent down over the railing, and perceived Coppelius. With a piercing scream, “*Ha! foine oyes! foine oyes!*” he leapt over.

When Nathanael lay on the stone pavement with a broken head, Coppelius had disappeared in the crush and confusion.

Several years afterwards it was reported that, outside the door of a pretty country house in a remote district, Clara has been seen sitting hand in hand with a pleasant gentleman, whilst two bright boys were playing at her feet. From this it may be concluded that she eventually found that quiet domestic happiness which her cheerful, blithesome character required, and which Nathanael, with his tempest-tossed soul, could never have been able to give her.

## REGRET

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GUY DE MAUPASSANT

BORN: Near Dieppe, August 5, 1850. DIED: Paris, 1893.

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Monsieur SAVAL, who was called in Mantes "Father Saval," had just risen from bed. He was weeping. It was a dull autumn day; the leaves were falling. They fell slowly in the rain, like a heavier and slower rain. M. Saval was not in good spirits. He walked from the fireplace to the window, and from the window to the fireplace. Life has its sombre days. It would no longer have any but sombre days for him, for he had reached the age of sixty-two. He is alone, an old bachelor, with nobody about him. How sad it is to die alone, all alone, without any one who is devoted to you!

He pondered over his life, so barren, so empty. He recalled former days, the days of his childhood, the home, the house of his parents; his college days, his follies, the time he studied law in Paris, his father's illness, his death. He then returned to live with his mother. They lived together very quietly and desired nothing more. At last the mother died. How sad life is! He lived alone since then, and now, in his turn, he, too, will soon be dead. He will disappear, and that will be the end. There will be no more of Paul Saval upon the earth. What a frightful thing! Other people will love, will laugh. Yes, people will go on amusing themselves, and he will no longer exist! Is it not strange that people can laugh, amuse themselves, be joyful under that eternal certainty of death? If this death were only probable, one could then have hope; but no, it is inevitable, as inevitable as that night follows the day.

If, however, his life had been full! If he had done something; if he had had adventures, great pleasures, success, satisfaction of some kind or another. But no, nothing. He had done nothing,



nothing but rise from bed, eat, at the same hours, and go to bed again. And he had gone on like that to the age of sixty-two years. He had not even taken unto himself a wife, as other men do. Why? Yes, why was it that he had not married? He might have done so, for he possessed considerable means. Had he lacked an opportunity? Perhaps! But one can create opportunities. He was indifferent; that was all. Indifference had been his greatest drawback, his defect, his vice. How many men wreck their lives through indifference! It is so difficult for some natures to get out of bed, to move about, to take long walks, to speak, to study any question.

He had not even been loved. No woman had reposed on his bosom, in a complete abandon of love. He knew nothing of the delicious anguish of expectation, the divine vibration of a hand in yours, of the ecstasy of triumphant passion.

What superhuman happiness must overflow your heart, when lips encounter lips for the first time, when the grasp of four arms makes one being of you, a being unutterably happy, two beings infatuated with one another.

M. Saval was sitting before the fire, his feet on the fender, in his dressing gown. Assuredly his life had been spoiled, completely spoiled. He had, however, loved. He had loved secretly, sadly, and indifferently, in a manner characteristic of him in everything. Yes, he had loved his old friend, Madame Sandres, the wife of his old companion, Sandres. Ah! if he had known her as a young girl! But he had met her too late; she was already married. Unquestionably, he would have asked her hand! How he had loved her, nevertheless, without respite, since the first day he set eyes on her!

He recalled his emotion every time he saw her, his grief on leaving her, the many nights that he could not sleep, because he was thinking of her.

On rising in the morning he was somewhat more rational than on the previous evening.

Why?

How pretty she was formerly, so dainty, with fair curly hair, and always laughing. Sandres was not the man she should have chosen. She was now fifty-eight years of age. She seemed happy. Ah! if she had only loved him! And why should she not have loved him, he, Saval, seeing that he loved her so much, yes, she, Madame Sandres!

If only she could have guessed. Had she not guessed anything, seen anything, comprehended anything? What would she have thought? If he had spoken, what would she have answered?

And Saval asked himself a thousand other things. He reviewed his whole life, seeking to recall a multitude of details.

He recalled all the long evenings spent at the house of Sandres, when the latter's wife was young, and so charming.

He recalled many things that she had said to him, the intonations of her voice, the little significant smiles that meant so much.

He recalled their walks, the three of them together, along the banks of the Seine, their luncheon on the grass on Sundays, for Sandres was employed at the sub-prefecture. And all at once the distinct recollection came to him of an afternoon spent with her in a little wood on the banks of the river.

They had set out in the morning, carrying their provisions in baskets. It was a bright spring morning, one of those days which intoxicate one. Everything smells fresh, everything seems happy. The voices of the birds sound more joyous, and they fly more swiftly. They had luncheon on the grass, under the willow trees, quite close to the water, which glittered in the sun's rays. The air was balmy, charged with the odors of fresh vegetation; they drank it in with delight. How pleasant everything was on that day!

After lunch, Sandres went to sleep on the broad of his back. "The best nap he had in his life," said he, when he woke up.

Madame Sandres had taken the arm of Saval, and they started to walk along the river bank.

She leaned tenderly on his arm. She laughed and said to him: "I am intoxicated, my friend, I am quite intoxicated." He looked at her, his heart going pit-a-pat. He felt himself grow pale, fearful that he might have looked too boldly at her, and that the trembling of his hand had revealed his passion.

She had made a wreath of wild flowers and water-lilies, and she asked him: "Do I look pretty like that?"

As he did not answer—for he could find nothing to say, he would have liked to go down on his knees—she burst out laughing, a sort of annoyed, displeased laugh, as she said: "Great goose, what ails you? You might at least say something!"

And he recalled how tenderly she had leaned on his arm. And in passing under a shady tree he had felt her ear brushing his

check, and he had moved his head abruptly, lest she should suppose he was too familiar.

When he had said to her: "Is it not time to return?" she darted a singular look at him. "Certainly," she said, "certainly," regarding him at the same time in a curious manner. He had not thought of it at the time, but now the whole thing appeared to him quite plain.

"Just as you like, my friend. If you are tired let us go back."

And he had answered: "I am not fatigued; but Sandres may be awake now."

And she had said: "If you are afraid of my husband's being awake, that is another thing. Let us return."

On their way back she remained silent, and leaned no longer on his arm. Why?

At that time it had never occurred to him to ask himself "why." Now he seemed to apprehend something that he had not then understood.

Could it? . . .

M. Saval felt himself blush, and he got up at a bound, as if he were thirty years younger and had heard Madame Sandres say, "I love you."

Was it possible? That idea which had just entered his mind tortured him. Was it possible that he had not seen, had not guessed?

Oh! if that were true, if he had let this opportunity of happiness pass without taking advantage of it!

He said to himself: "I must know. I cannot remain in this state of doubt. I must know!" He thought: "I am sixty-two years of age, she is fifty-eight; I may ask her that now without giving offense."

He started out.

The Sandres' house was situated on the other side of the street, almost directly opposite his own. He went across and knocked at the door, and a little servant opened it.

"You here at this hour, Saval! Has some accident happened to you?"

"No, my girl," he replied; "but go and tell your mistress that I want to speak to her at once."

"The fact is madame is preserving pears for the winter, and she is in the preserving room. She is not diessed, you understand."

"Yes, but go and tell her that I wish to see her on a very important matter."

The little servant went away, and Saval began to walk, with long, nervous strides, up and down the drawing-room. He did not feel in the least embarrassed, however. Oh! he was merely going to ask her something, as he would have asked her about some cooking recipe. He was sixty-two years of age!

The door opened and madame appeared. She was now a large woman, fat and round, with full cheeks and a sonorous laugh. She walked with her arms away from her sides and her sleeves tucked up, her bare arms all covered with fruit juice. She asked anxiously:

"What is the matter with you, my friend? You are not ill are you?"

"No, my dear friend; but I wish to ask you one thing, which to me is of the first importance, something which is torturing my heart, and I want you to promise that you will answer me frankly."

She laughed, "I am always frank. Say on."

"Well, then. I have loved you from the first day I ever saw you. Can you have any doubt of this?"

She responded, laughing, with something of her former tone of voice.

"Great goose! what ails you? I knew it from the very first day!"

Saval began to tremble. He stammered out: "You knew it? Then . . ."

He stopped.

She asked:

"Then? . . . What?"

He answered:

"Then—what did you think? What—what—what would you have answered?"

She broke into a peal of laughter. Some of the juice ran off the tips of her fingers on to the carpet.

"If? Why, you did not ask me anything. It was not for me to declare myself!"

He then advanced a step toward her.

"Tell me—tell me. . . . You remember the day when Sandres

went to sleep on the grass after lunch . . . when we had walked together as far as the bend of the river, below . . .”

He waited, expectantly. She had ceased to laugh, and looked at him, straight in the eyes.

“Yes, certainly, I remember it.”

He answered, trembling all over:

“Well—that day—if I had been—if I had been—venturesome—what would you have done?”

She began to laugh as only a happy woman can laugh, who has nothing to regret, and responded frankly, in a clear voice tinged with irony:

“I would have yielded, my friend.”

She then turned on her heels and went back to her jam-making.

Saval rushed into the street, cast down, as though he had met with some disaster. He walked with giant strides through the rain, straight on, until he reached the river bank, without thinking where he was going. He then turned to the right and followed the river. He walked a long time, as if urged on by some instinct. His clothes were running with water, his hat was out of shape, as soft as a rag, and dripping like a roof. He walked on, straight in front of him. At last, he came to the place where they had lunched on that day so long ago, the recollection of which tortured his heart. He sat down under the leafless trees, and wept.

## THE ROBE OF PEACE

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O. HENRY

BORN: Greensboro, North Carolina, September 11, 1862.

DIED: New York, June 5, 1910.

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MYSTERIES FOLLOW one another so closely in a great city that the reading public and the friends of Johnny Bellchambers have ceased to marvel at his sudden and unexplained disappearance nearly a year ago. This particular mystery has now been cleared up, but the solution is so strange and incredible to the mind of the average man that only a select few who were in close touch with Bellchambers will give it full credence.

Johnny Bellchambers, as is well known, belonged to the intrinsically inner circle of the elite. Without any of the ostentation of the fashionable ones who endeavor to attract notice by eccentric display of wealth and show he still was *au fait* in everything that gave deserved lustre to his high position in the ranks of society.

Especially did he shine in the matter of dress. In this he was the despair of imitators. Always correct, exquisitely groomed, and possessed of an unlimited wardrobe, he was conceded to be the best-dressed man in New York, and, therefore, in America. There was not a tailor in Gotham who would not have deemed it a precious boon to have been granted the privilege of making Bellchambers' clothes without a cent of pay. As he wore them, they would have been a priceless advertisement. Trousers were his especial passion. Here nothing but perfection would be noticed. He would have worn a patch as quickly as he would have overlooked a wrinkle. He kept a man in his apartments always busy pressing his ample supply. His friends said that three hours was the limit of time that he would wear these garments without exchanging.

Bellchambers disappeared very suddenly. For three days his absence brought no alarm to his friends, and then they began to operate the usual methods of inquiry. All of them failed. He had left absolutely no trace behind. Then the search for a motive was instituted, but none was found. He had no enemies, he had no debts, there was no woman. There were several thousand dollars in his bank to his credit. He had never showed any tendency toward mental eccentricity; in fact, he was of a particularly calm and well-balanced temperament. Every means of tracing the vanished man was made use of, but without avail. It was one of those cases—more numerous in late years—where men seem to have gone out like the flame of a candle, leaving not even a trail of smoke as a witness.

In May, Tom Eyres and Lancelot Gilliam, two of Bellchambers' old friends, went for a little run on the other side. While pottering around in Italy and Switzerland, they happened, one day, to hear of a monastery in the Swiss Alps that promised something outside of the ordinary tourist-beguiling attractions. The monastery was almost inaccessible to the average sight-seer, being on an extremely rugged and precipitous spur of the mountains. The attractions it possessed but did not advertise were, first, an exclusive and divine cordial made by the monks that was said to far surpass benedictine and chartreuse. Next a huge brass bell so purely and accurately cast that it had not ceased sounding since it was first rung three hundred years ago. Finally, it was asserted that no Englishman had ever set foot within its walls. Eyres and Gilliam decided that these three reports called for investigation.

It took them two days with the aid of two guides to reach the monastery of St. Gondrau. It stood upon a frozen, wind-swept crag with the snow piled about it in treacherous, drifting masses. They were hospitably received by the brothers whose duty it was to entertain the infrequent guest. They drank of the precious cordial finding it rarely potent and reviving. They listened to the great, ever-echoing bell and learned that they were pioneer travelers, in those gray stone walls, over the Englishman whose restless feet have trodden nearly every corner of the earth.

At three o'clock on the afternoon they arrived, the two young Gothamites stood with good Brother Cristofer in the great, cold

hallway of the monastery to watch the monks march past on their way to the refectory. They came slowly, pacing by twos, with their heads bowed, treading noiselessly with sandaled feet upon the rough stone flags. As the procession slowly filed past, Eyres suddenly gripped Gilliam by the arm. "Look," he whispered, eagerly, "at the one just opposite you now—the one on this side, with his hand at his waist—if that isn't Johnny Bellchambers then I never saw him!"

Gilliam saw and recognized the lost glass of fashion.

"What the deuce," said he, wonderingly, "is old Bell doing here? Tommy, it surely can't be he! Never heard of Bell having a turn for the religious. Fact is, I've heard him say things when a four-in-hand didn't seem to tie up just right that would bring him up for court-martial before any church."

"It's Bell, without a doubt," said Eyres, firmly, "or I'm pretty badly in need of an oculist. But think of Johnny Bellchambers, the Royal High Chancellor of swell togs and the Mahatma of pink teas, up here in cold storage doing penance in a snuff-colored bathrobe! I can't get it straight in my mind. Let's ask the jolly old boy that's doing the honors."

Brother Cristofer was appealed to for information. By that time the monks had passed into the refectory. He could not tell to which one they referred. Bellchambers? Ah, the brothers of St. Gondrau abandoned their worldly names when they took the vows. Did the gentlemen wish to speak with one of the brothers? If they would come to the refectory and indicate the one they wished to see, the reverend abbot in authority would, doubtless, permit it.

Eyres and Gilliam went into the dining hall and pointed out to Brother Cristofer the man they had seen. Yes, it was Johnny Bellchambers. They saw his face plainly now, as he sat among the dingy brothers, never looking up, eating broth from a coarse, brown bowl.

Permission to speak to one of the brothers was granted to the two travelers by the abbot, and they waited in a reception room for him to come. When he did come, treading softly in his sandals, both Eyres and Gilliam looked at him in perplexity and astonishment. It was Johnny Bellchambers, but he had a different look.



Upon his smooth-shaven face was an expression of ineffable peace, of rapturous attainment, of perfect and complete happiness. His form was proudly erect, his eyes shone with a serene and gracious light. He was as neat and well-groomed as in the old New York days, but how differently was he clad! Now he seemed clothed in but a single garment—a long robe of rough brown cloth, gathered by a cord at the waist, and falling in straight, loose folds nearly to his feet. He shook hands with his visitors with his old ease and grace of manner. If there was any embarrassment in that meeting it was not manifested by Johnny Bellchambers. The room had no seats; they stood to converse.

"Glad to see you, old man," said Eyres, somewhat awkwardly. "Wasn't expecting to find you up here. Not a bad idea, though, after all. Society's an awful sham. Must be a relief to shake the giddy whirl and retire—er—contemplation and—er—prayer and hymns, and those things."

"Oh, cut that, Tommy," said Bellchambers, cheerfully. "Don't be afraid that I'll pass around the plate. I go through these thing-um-bobs with the rest of these old boys because they are the rules. I'm Brother Ambrose here, you know. I'm given just ten minutes to talk to you fellows. That's rather a new design in waistcoats you have on, isn't it, Gilliam? Are they wearing those things on Broadway now?"

"It's the same old Johnny," said Gilliam, joyfully. "What the devil—I mean why— Oh, confound it! what did you do it for, old man?"

"Peel the bathrobe," pleaded Eyres, almost tearfully, "and go back with us. The old crowd'll go wild to see you. This isn't in your line, Bell. I know half a dozen girls that wore the willow on the quiet when you shook us in that unaccountable way. Hand in your resignation, or get a dispensation, or whatever you have to do to get a release from this ice factory. You'll get catarrh here, Johnny—and— My God! you haven't any socks on!"

Bellchambers looked down at his sandaled feet and smiled.

"You fellows don't understand," he said, soothingly. "It's nice of you to want me to go back, but the old life will never know me again. I have reached here the goal of all my ambitions. I am entirely happy and contented. Here I shall remain for the re-

mainder of my days. You see this robe that I wear?" Bellchambers caressingly touched the straight-hanging garment: "At last I have found something that will not bag at the knees. I have attained—"

At that moment the deep boom of the great brass bell reverberated through the monastery. It must have been a summons to immediate devotions, for Brother Ambrose bowed his head, turned and left the chamber without another word. A slight wave of his hand as he passed through the stone doorway seemed to say a farewell to his old friends. They left the monastery without seeing him again.

And this is the story that Tommy Eyres and Lancelot Gilliam brought back with them from their latest European tour.

# A MEDIAEVAL ROMANCE

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MARK TWAIN

BORN: Florida, Missouri, November 30, 1835.

DIED: Redding, Conn., April 21, 1910.

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IT WAS NIGHT. Stillness reigned in the grand old feudal castle of Klugenstein. The year 1222 was drawing to a close. Far away up in the tallest of the castle's towers a single light glimmered. A secret council was being held there. The stern old lord of Klugenstein sat in a chair of state meditating. Presently he said, with a tender accent: "My daughter!"

A young man of noble presence, clad from head to heel in knightly mail, answered: "Speak, father!"

"My daughter, the time is come for the revealing of the mystery that hath puzzled all your young life. Know, then, that it had its birth in the matters which I shall now unfold. My brother Ulrich is the great Duke of Brandenburg. Our father, on his deathbed, decreed that if no son were born to Ulrich the succession should pass to my house, provided a son were born to me. And further, in case no son were born to either, but only daughters, then the succession should pass to Ulrich's daughter if she proved stainless; if she did not, my daughter should succeed if she retained a blameless name. And so I and my old wife here prayed fervently for the good boon of a son, but the prayer was vain. You were born to us. I was in despair. I saw the mighty prize slipping from my grasp—the splendid dream vanishing away! And I had been so hopeful! Five years had Ulrich lived in wedlock, and yet his wife had borne no heir of either sex.

"'But hold,' I said, 'all is not lost.' A saving scheme had shot

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Written about 1868.

athwart my brain. You were born at midnight. Only the leech, the nurse, and six waiting-women knew your sex. I hanged them every one before an hour sped. Next morning all the barony went mad with rejoicing over the proclamation that a son was born to Klugenstein—an heir to mighty Brandenburgh! And well the secret has been kept. You mother's own sister nursed your infancy, and from that time forward we feared nothing.

"When you were ten years old a daughter was born to Ulrich. We grieved, but hoped for good results from measles, or physicians, or other natural enemies of infancy, but were always disappointed. She lived, she thrived—Heaven's malison upon her! But it is nothing. We are safe. For, ha! ha! have we not a son? And is not our son the future duke? Our well-beloved Conrad, is it not so?—for woman of eight-and-twenty years as you are, my child, none other name than that hath ever fallen to you!

"Now it hath come to pass that age hath laid its hand upon my brother, and he waxes feeble. The cares of state do tax him sore, therefore he wills that you shall come to him and be already duke in act, though not yet in name. Your servitors are ready—your journey forth to-night.

"Now listen well. Remember every word I say. There is a law as old as Germany, that if any woman sit for a single instant in the great ducal chair before she hath been absolutely crowned in presence of the people—*SHE SHALL DIE!* So heed my words. Pretend humility. Pronounce your judgments from the Premier's chair, which stands at the foot of the throne. Do this until you are crowned and safe. It is not likely that your sex will ever be discovered, but still it is the part of wisdom to make all things as safe as may be in this treacherous earthly life."

"Oh, my father! is it for this my life hath been a lie? Was it that I might cheat my unoffending cousin of her rights? Spare me, father, spare your child!"

"What, hussy! Is this my reward for the august fortune my brain has wrought for thee? By the bones of my father, this puling sentiment of thine but ill accords with my humor. Betake thee to the duke instantly, and beware how thou meddlest with my purpose!"

Let this suffice of the conversation. It is enough for us to know

that the prayers, the entreaties, and the tears of the gentle-natured girl availed nothing. Neither they nor anything could move the stout old lord of Klugenstein. And so, at last, with a heavy heart, the daughter saw the castle gates close behind her, and found herself riding away in the darkness surrounded by a knightly array of armed vassals and a brave following of servants.

The old baron sat silent for many minutes after his daughter's departure, and then he turned to his sad wife, and said:

"Dame, our matters seem speeding fairly. It is full three months since I sent the shrewd and handsome Count Detzin on his devilish mission to my brother's daughter Constance. If he fail we are not wholly safe, but if he do succeed no power can bar our girl from being duchess, e'en though ill fortune should decree she never should be duke!"

"My heart is full of bodings; yet all may still be well."

"Tush, woman! Leave the owls to croak. To bed with ye, and dream of Brandenburg and grandeur!"

Six days after the occurrences related in the above chapter, the brilliant capital of the Duchy of Brandenburg was resplendent with military pageantry, and noisy with the rejoicings of loyal multitudes, for Conrad, the young heir to the crown, was come. The old duke's heart was full of happiness, for Conrad's handsome person and graceful bearing had won his love at once. The great halls of the palace were thronged with nobles, who welcomed Conrad bravely; and so bright and happy did all things seem, that he felt his fears and sorrows passing away, and giving place to a comforting contentment.

But in a remote apartment of the palace a scene of a different nature was transpiring. By a window stood the duke's only child, the Lady Constance. Her eyes were red and swollen, and full of tears. She was alone. Presently she fell to weeping anew, and said aloud:

"The villain Detzin is gone—has fled the dukedom! I could not believe it at first, but, alas! it is too true. And I loved him so. I dared to love him though I knew the duke, my father, would never let me wed him. I loved him—but now I hate him! With all my soul I hate him! Oh, what is to become of me? I am lost, lost, lost! I shall go mad!"

A few months drifted by. All men published the praises of the young Conrad's government, and extolled the wisdom of his judgments, the mercifulness of his sentences, and the modesty with which he bore himself in his great office. The old duke soon gave everything into his hands, and sat apart and listened with proud satisfaction while his heir delivered the decrees of the crown from the seat of the Premier. It seemed plain that one so loved and praised and honored of all men as Conrad was could not be otherwise than happy. But, strangely enough, he was not. For he saw with dismay that the Princess Constance had begun to love him! The love of the rest of the world was happy fortune for him, but this was freighted with danger! And he saw, moreover, that the delighted duke had discovered his daughter's passion likewise, and was already dreaming of a marriage. Every day somewhat of the deep sadness that had been in the princess's face faded away; every day hope and animation beamed brighter from her eye; and by and by even vagrant smiles visited the face that had been so troubled.

Conrad was appalled. He bitterly cursed himself for having yielded to the instinct that had made him seek the companionship of one of his own sex when he was new and a stranger in the palace—when he was sorrowful and yearned for a sympathy such as only women can give or feel. He now began to avoid his cousin. But this only made matters worse, for, naturally enough, the more he avoided her the more she cast herself in his way. He marveled at this at first, and next it startled him. The girl haunted him; she hunted him; she happened upon him at all times and in all places, in the night as well as in the day. She seemed singularly anxious. There was surely a mystery somewhere.

This could not go on forever. All the world was talking about it. The duke was beginning to look perplexed. Poor Conrad was becoming a very ghost through dread and dire distress. One day as he was emerging from a private anteroom attached to the picture gallery Constance confronted him, and seizing both his hands in hers, exclaimed:

"Oh, why do you avoid me? What have I done—what have I said; to lose your kind opinion of me—for surely I had it once? Conrad, do not despise me, but pity a tortured heart? I cannot, cannot hold the words unspoken longer, lest they kill me—I LOVE

you, CONRAD! There, despise me if you must, but they would be uttered!"

Conrad was speechless. Constance hesitated a moment, and then, misinterpreting his silence, a wild gladness flamed in her eyes, and she flung her arms about his neck and said:

"You relent! you relent! You can love me—you will love me! Oh, say you will, my own, my worshiped Conrad!"

Conrad groaned aloud. A sickly pallor overspread his countenance, and he trembled like an aspen. Presently, in desperation, he thrust the poor girl from him, and cried:

"You know not what you ask! It is forever and ever impossible!" And then he fled like a criminal, and left the princess stupefied with amazement. A minute afterward she was crying and sobbing there, and Conrad was crying and sobbing in his chamber. Both were in despair. Both saw ruin staring them in the face.

By and by Constance rose slowly to her feet and moved away, saying:

"To think that he was despising my love at the very moment I thought it was melting his cruel heart! I hate him! He spurned me—did this man—he spurned me from him like a dog!"

Time passed on. A settled sadness rested once more upon the countenance of the good duke's daughter. She and Conrad were seen together no more now. The duke grieved at this. But as the weeks wore away Conrad's color came back to his cheeks, and his old-time vivacity to his eye, and he administered the government with a clear and steadily ripening wisdom.

Presently a strange whisper began to be heard about the palace. It grew louder; it spread farther. The gossips of the city got hold of it. It swept the dukedom. And this is what the whisper said:

"The Lady Constance hath given birth to a child!"

When the lord of Klugenstein heard it he swung his plumed helmet thrice around his head and shouted:

"Long live Duke Conrad!—for lo, his crown is sure from this day forward! Detzin has done his errand well, and the good scoundrel shall be rewarded!"

And he spread the tidings far and wide, and for eight-and-forty hours no soul in all the barony but did dance and sing, carouse and illuminate, to celebrate the great event, and all proud and happy at old Klugenstein's expense.

The trial was at hand. All the great lords and barons of Brandenburg were assembled in the Hall of Justice in the ducal palace. No space was left unoccupied where there was room for a spectator to stand or sit. Conrad, clad in purple and ermine, sat in the Premier's chair, and on either side sat the great judges of the realm. The old duke had sternly commanded that the trial of his daughter should proceed without favor, and then had taken to his bed broken-hearted. His days were numbered. Poor Conrad had begged, as for his very life, that he might be spared the misery of sitting in judgment upon his cousin's crime, but it did not avail.

The saddest heart in all that great assemblage was in Conrad's breast.

The gladdest was in his father's, for, unknown to his daughter "Conrad," the old Baron Klugenstein was come, and was among the crowd of nobles triumphant in the swelling fortunes of his house.

After the heralds had made due proclamation and the other preliminaries had followed, the venerable Lord Chief Justice said: "Prisoner, stand forth!"

The unhappy princess rose, and stood unveiled before the vast multitude. The Lord Chief Justice continued:

"Most noble lady, before the great judges of this realm it hath been charged and proven that out of holy wedlock your Grace hath given birth unto a child, and by our ancient law the penalty is death excepting in one sole contingency, whereof his Grace the acting duke, our good Lord Conrad, will advertise you in his solemn sentence now; wherefore give heed."

Conrad stretched forth his reluctant scepter, and in the self-same moment the womanly heart beneath his robe yearned pitiingly toward the doomed prisoner, and the tears came into his eyes. He opened his lips to speak, but the Lord Chief Justice said quickly:

"Not there, your Grace, not there! It is not lawful to pronounce judgment upon any of the ducal line SAVE FROM THE DUCAL THRONE!"

A shudder went to the heart of poor Conrad, and a tremor shook the iron frame of his old father likewise. CONRAD HAD NOT BEEN CROWNED—dared he profane the throne? He hesitated and



turned pale with fear. But it must be done. Wondering eyes were already upon him. They would be suspicious eyes if he hesitated longer. He ascended the throne. Presently he stretched forth the scepter again, and said:

"Prisoner, in the name of our sovereign Lord Ulrich, Duke of Brandenburgh, I proceed to the solemn duty that hath devolved upon me. Give heed to my words. By the ancient law of the land, except you produce the partner of your guilt and deliver him up to the executioner you must surely die. Embrace this opportunity—save yourself while yet you may. Name the father of your child!"

A solemn hush fell upon the great court—a silence so profound that men could hear their own hearts beat. Then the princess slowly turned, with eyes gleaming with hate, and pointing her finger straight at Conrad, said:

"Thou art the man!"

An appalling conviction of his helpless, hopeless peril struck a chill to Conrad's heart like the chill of death itself. What power on earth could save him! To disprove the charge he must reveal that he was a woman, and for an uncrowned woman to sit in the ducal chair was death! At one and the same moment he and his grim old father swooned and fell to the ground.

The remainder of this thrilling and eventful story will not be found in this or any other publication, either now or at any future time.

The truth is, I have got my hero (or heroine) into such a particularly close place that I do not see how I am ever going to get him (or her) out of it again, and therefore I will wash my hands of the whole business, and leave that person to get out the best way that offers—or else stay there. I thought it was going to be easy enough to straighten out that little difficulty, but it looks different now.

# THE DERELICT

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H. M. TOMLINSON

BORN: London, 1873.

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**I**N A TRAMP STEAMER, which was overloaded, and in midwinter, I had crossed to America for the first time. What we experienced of the western ocean during that passage gave me so much respect for it that the prospect of the return journey, three thousand miles of those seas between me and home, was already a dismal foreboding. The shipping posters of New York, showing stately liners too lofty even to notice the Atlantic, were arguments good enough for steerage passengers, who do, I know, reckon a steamer's worth by the number of its funnels; but the pictures did nothing to lessen my regard for that dark outer world I knew. And having no experience of ships installed with racquet courts, Parisian cafes, swimming baths, and pergolas, I was naturally puzzled by the inconsequential behaviour of the first-class passengers at the hotel. They were leaving by the liner which was to take me, and, I gathered, were going to cross a bridge to England in the morning. Of course, this might have been merely the innocent profanity of the simple-minded.

Embarking at the quay next day, I could not see that our ship had either a beginning or an end. There was a blank wall which ran out of sight to the right and left. How far it went, and what it enclosed, were beyond me. Hundreds of us in a slow procession mounted stairs to the upper floor of a warehouse, and from thence a bridge led us to a door in the wall half-way in its height. No funnels could be seen. Looking straight up from the embarkation

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gangway, along what seemed the parapet of the wall was a row of far-off indistinguishable faces peering straight down at us. There was no evidence that this building we were entering, of which the high black wall was a part, was not an important and permanent feature of the city. It was in keeping with the magnitude of New York's skyscrapers, which this planet's occasionally non-irritant skin permits to stand there to afford man an apparent reason to be gratified with his own capacity and daring.

But with the knowledge that this wall must be afloat there came no sense of security when, going through that little opening in its altitude, I found myself in a spacious decorated interior which hinted nothing of a ship, for I was puzzled as to direction. My last ship could be surveyed in two glances; she looked, and was, a comprehensible ship, no more than a manageable handful for an able master. In that ship you could see at once where you were and what to do. But in this liner you could not see where you were, and would never know which way to take unless you had a good memory. No understanding came to me in that hall of a measured and shapely body, designed with a cunning informed by ages of sea-lore to move buoyantly and surely among the ranging seas, to balance delicately, a quick and sensitive being, to every precarious slope, to recover a lost poise easily and with the grace natural to a quick creature controlled by an alert mind.

There was no shape at all to this structure. I could see no line the run of which gave me warrant that it was comprised in the rondure of a ship. The lines were all of straight corridors, which, for all I knew, might have ended blindly on open space, as streets which traverse a city and are bare in vacancy beyond the dwellings. It was possible we were encompassed by walls, but only one wall was visible. There we idled, all strangers, and to remain strangers, in a large hall roofed by a dome of coloured glass. Quite properly, palms stood beneath. There were offices and doors everywhere. On a broad staircase a multitude of us wandered aimlessly up and down. Each side of the stairway were electric lifts, intermittent and brilliant apparitions. I began to understand why the saloon passengers thought nothing of the voyage. They were encountering nothing unfamiliar. They had but come to another hotel for a few days.

I attempted to find my cabin, but failed. A uniformed guide took care of me. But my cabin, curtained, upholstered, and warm, with mirrors and plated ware, sunk somewhere deeply among carpeted and silent streets down each of which the perspective of glow-lamps looked interminable, left me still questioning. The long walk had given me a fear that I was remote from important affairs which might be happening beyond. My address was 323. The street door—I was down a side turning, though—bore that number. A visitor could make no mistake, supposing he could find the street and my side turning. That was it. There was a very great deal in this place for everybody to remember, and most of us were strangers. No doubt, however, we were afloat, if the life-belts in the rack meant anything. Yet the cabin, insulated from all noise, was not soothing, but disturbing. I had been used to a ship in which you could guess all that was happening even when in your bunk; a sensitive and communicative ship.

A steward appeared at my door, a stranger out of nowhere, and asked whether I had seen a bag not mine in the cabin. He might have been created merely to put that question, for I never saw him again on the voyage. This liner was a large province having irregular and shifting bounds, permitting incontinent entrance and disappearance. All this should have inspired me with an idea of our vastness and importance, but it did not. I felt I was one of a multitude included in a nebulous mass too vague to hold together unless we were constantly wary.

In the saloon there was the solid furniture of rare woods, the ornate decorations, and the light and shadows making vague its limits and giving it an appearance of immensity, to keep the mind from the thought of our real circumstances. At dinner we had valentine music, dreamy stuff to accord with the shaded lamps which displayed the tables in a lower rosy light. It helped to extend the mysterious and romantic shadows. The pale, disembodied masks of the waiters swam in the dusk above the tinted light. I had for a companion a vivacious American lady from the Middle West, and she looked round that prospect we had of an expensive cafe, and said, "Well, but I am disappointed. Why, I've been looking forward to seeing the ocean, you know. And it isn't here."

"Smooth passage," remarked a man on the other side. "No sea at all worth mentioning." Actually, I know there was a heavy beam sea running before a half-gale. I could guess the officer in charge somewhere on the exposed roof might have another mind about it; but it made no difference to us in our circle of rosy intimate light bound by those vague shadows which were alive with ready servitude.

"And I've been reading *Captains Courageous* with this voyage in view. Isn't this the month when the forties roar? I want to hear them roar, just once, you know, and as gently as any sucking dove." We all laughed. "We can't even tell we're in a ship."

She began to discuss Kipling's book. "There's some fine seas in that. Have you read it? But I'd like to know where that ocean is he pretends to have seen. I do believe the realists are no more reliable than the romanticists. Here we are a thousand miles out, and none of us has seen the sea yet. Tell me, does not a realist have to magnify his awful billows just to get them into his reader's view?"

I murmured something feeble and sociable. I saw then why sailors never talk directly of the sea. I, for instance, could not find my key at that moment—it was in another pocket somewhere—so I had no iron to touch. Talking largely of the sea is something like the knowing talk of young men about women; and what is a simple sailor man that he should open his mouth on mysteries?

Only on the liner's boat-deck, where you could watch her four funnels against the sky, could you see to what extent the liner was rolling. The arc seemed to be considerable then, but slowly described. But the roll made little difference to the promenaders below. Sometimes they walked a short distance on the edges of their boots, leaning over as they did so, and swerving from the straight, as though they had turned giddy. The shadows formed by the weak sunlight moved slowly out of ambush across the white deck, but often moved indecisively, as though uncertain of a need to go; and then slowly went into hiding again. The sea whirling and leaping past was far below our wall side. It was like peering dizzily over a precipice when watching those green and white cataracts.

The passengers, wrapped and comfortable on the lee deck,

chatted as blithely as at a garden-party, while the band played medleys of national airs to suit our varied complexions. The stewards came round with loaded trays. A diminutive and wrinkled dame in costly furs frowned through her golden spectacles at her book, while her maid sat attentively by. An American actress was the centre of an eager group of grinning young men; she was unseen, but her voice was distinct. The two Vanderbilts took their brisk constitutional among us as though the liner had but two real passengers though many invisible nobodies. The children, who had not ceased laughing and playing since we left New York, waited for the slope of the deck to reach its greatest, and then ran down towards the bulwarks precipitously. The children, happy and innocent, completed for us the feeling of comfortable indifference and security which we found when we saw there was more ship than ocean. The liner's deck canted slowly to leeward, went over more and more, beyond what it had done yet, and a pretty little girl with dark curls riotous from under her red tam-o'-shanter, ran down, and brought up against us violently with both hands, laughing heartily. We laughed too. Looking seawards, I saw receding the broad green hill, snow-capped, which had lifted us and let us down. The sea was getting up.

Near sunset, when the billows were mounting express along our run, sometimes to leap and snatch at our upper structure, and were rocking us with some ease, there was a commotion forward. Books and shawls went anywhere as the passengers ran. Something strange was to be seen upon the waters.

It looked like a big log out there ahead, over the starboard bow. It was not easy to make out. The light was falling. We overhauled it rapidly, and it began to shape as a ship's boat. "Oh, it's gone," exclaimed some one then. But the forlorn object lifted high again, and sank once more. Whenever it was glimpsed it was set in a patch of foam.

That flotsam, whatever it was, was of man. As we watched it intently, and before it was quite plain, we knew intuitively that hope was not there, that we were watching something past its doom. It drew abeam, and we saw what it was, a derelict sailing ship, mastless and awash. The alien wilderness was around us now, and we saw a sky that was overcast and driven, and seas that were

uplifted, which had grown inciedibly huge, swift, and perilous, and they had colder and more sombie hues.

The derelict was a schooner, a lifeless and soddened hulk, so heavy and uncontesting that its foundering seemed at hand. The waters poured back and forth at her waist, as though holding her body captive for the assaults of the active seas which came over her broken bulwarks, and plunged ruthlessly about. There was something ironic in the indifference of her defenceless body to these unending attacks. It mocked this white and raging post-mortem brutality, and gave her a dignity that was cold and superior to all the eternal powers could now do. She pitched helplessly head first into a hollow, and a door flew open under the break of her poop; it surprised and shocked us, for the dead might have signed to us then. She went astern of us fast, and a great comber ran at her, as if it had but just spied her, and thought she was escaping. There was a high white flash, and a concussion we heard. She had gone. But she appeared again far away, on a summit in desolation, black against the sunset. The stump of her bowsprit, the accusatory finger of the dead, pointed at the sky.

I turned, and there beside me was the lady who had wanted to find the sea. She was gazing at the place where the wreck was last seen, her eyes fixed, her mouth a little open in awe and horror.

# LITTLE OLD NEW YORK

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HARRY LEON WILSON

BORN: Oregon, Illinois, May 1, 1867. DIED: June 29, 1939.

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MONDAY'S MAIL for the Arrowhead was brought in by the Chinaman while Ma Pettengill and I loitered to the close of the evening meal: a canvas sack of letters and newspapers with three bulky packages of merchandise that had come by parcels post. The latter evoked a passing storm from my hostess. Hadn't she warned folks time and again to send all her stuff by express instead of by parcels post, which would sure get her gunned some day by the stage driver who got nothing extra for hauling such matter? She had so!

We trifled now with a fruity dessert and the lady regaled me with a brief exposure of our great parcels-post system as a piece of the nerviest penny pinching she had ever known our Government guilty of. Because why? Because these here poor R. F. D. stage drivers had to do the extra hauling for nothing.

"Here's old Harvey Steptoe with the mail contract for sixty dollars a month, three trips a week between Red Gap and Surprise Valley, forty-five miles each way, barely making enough extra on express matter and local freight to come out even after buying horse-feed. Then comes parcels post, and parties that had had to pay him four bits or a dollar for a large package, or two bits for a small one, can have 'em brought in by mail for nothing. Of course most of us eased up on him after we understood the hellish injustice of it. We took pains not to have things sent parcels post and when they come unbeknown to us, like these

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Printed in the *Saturday Evening Post*, then in the book, *Somewhere in Red Gap*, 1916.



here to-night, we'd always pay him anyway, just like they was express. It was only fair and, besides, we would live longer, Harvey Steptoe being morose and sudden.

"Like when old Safety First Timmins got the idea he could have all his supplies sent from Red Gap for almost nothing by putting stamps on 'em. He was tickled to death with the notion until, after the second load of about a hundred pounds, some cowardly assassin shot at him from the brush one morning about the time the stage usually went down past his ranch. The charge missed him by about four inches and went into the barn door. He dug it out and found a bullet and two buckshot. Old Safety First ain't any Sherlock Holmes, but even Doctor Watson could of solved this murderous crime. When Harvey come by the next night he went out and says to him, 'Ain't you got one of them old Mississippi Yaegers about seventy-five years old that carries a bullet and two buckshot?' Harvey thought back earnestly for a minute, then says, 'Not now I ain't. I used to have one of them old hair-looms around the house but I found they ain't reliable when you want to do fine work from a safe distance; so I threw her away yesterday morning and got me this nice new 30-30 down to Goshook & Dale's hardware store.'

"He pulled the new gun out and patted it tenderly in the sight of old Timmins. 'Ain't it a cunning little implement?' he says; 'I tried it out coming up this afternoon. I could split a hair with it as far, say, as from that clump of buck-brush over to your barn. And by the way, Mr. Timmins,' he says, 'I got some more stuff for you here from the Square Deal Grocery—stuff all gummed up with postage stamps.' He leans his new toy against the seat and dumps out a sack of flour and a sack of dried fruit and one or two other things. 'This parcels post is a grand thing, ain't it?' says he.

"'Well—yes and no, now that you speak of it,' says old Safety First. 'The fact is I'm kind of prejudiced against it; I ain't going to have things come to me any more all stuck over with them trifling little postage stamps. It don't look dignified.' 'No?' says Harvey. 'No,' says Safety First in a firm tone. 'I won't ever have another single thing come by mail if I can help it.' 'I bet you're superstitious,' says Harvey, climbing back to his seat and petting the new gun again. 'I bet you're so superstitious you'd take this

here shiny new implement off my hands at cost if I hinted I'd part with it.' 'I almost believe I would,' says Safety First. 'Well, it don't seem like I'd have much use for it after all,' says Harvey. 'Of course I can always get a new one if my fancy happens to run that way again.'

"So old Safety First buys a new loaded rifle that he ain't got a use on earth for. It would of looked to outsiders like he was throwing his money away on fripperies, but he knew it was a prime necessity of life all right. The parcels post ain't done him a bit of good since, though I send him marked pieces in the papers every now and then telling how the postmaster general thinks it's a great boon to the ultimate consumer. And I mustn't forget to send Harvey six bits for them three packages that come to-night. That's what we do. Otherwise, him being morose and turbulent, he'd get a new gun and make ultimate consumers out of all of us. Darned ultimate! I reckon we got a glorious Government, like candidates always tell us, but a postmaster general that expected stage drivers to do three times the hauling they had been doing with no extra pay wouldn't last long out at the tail of an R. F. D. route. There'd be pieces in the paper telling about how he rose to prominence from the time he got a lot of delegates sewed up for the people's choice and how his place will be hard to fill. It certainly would be hard to fill out here. Old Timmins, for one, would turn a deaf ear to his country's call."

Lew Wee having now cleared the table of all but coffee, we lingered for a leisurely overhauling of the mail sack. Ma Pettengill slit envelopes and read letters to an accompanying rumble of protest. She several times wished to know what certain parties took her for—and they'd be fooled if they did; and now and again she dwelt upon the insoluble mystery of her not being in the poorhouse at that moment; yes, and she'd of been there long ago if she had let these parties run her business like they thought they could. But what could a lone defenceless woman expect? She'd show them, though! Been showing 'em for thirty years now, and still had her health, hadn't she?

Letters and bills were at last neatly stacked and the poor weak woman fell upon the newspapers. The Red Gap Recorder was shorn of its wrapper. Being first a woman she turned to the fourth

page to flash a practised eye over that department which is headed "Life's Stages—At the Altar—In the Cradle!—To the Tomb." Having gleaned recent vital statistics she turned next to the column carrying the market quotations on beef cattle, for after being a woman she is a rancher. Prices for that day must have pleased her immensely for she grudgingly mumbled that they were less ruinous than she had expected. In the elation of which this admission was a sign she next refreshed me with various personal items from a column headed "Social Gleanings—by Madame On Dit."

I learned that at the last regular meeting of the Ladies' Friday Afternoon Shakespeare Club, Mrs. Dr. Percy Hailey Martingale had read a paper entitled "My Trip to the Panama-Pacific Exposition," after which a dainty collation was served by mine hostess Mrs. Judge Ballard; that Miss Beryl Mae Macomber, the well-known young society heiress, was visiting friends in Spokane where rumour hath it that she would take a course of lessons in elocution; and that Mrs. Cora Hartwick Wales, prominent society matron and leader of the ultra smart set of Price's Addition, had on Thursday afternoon at her charming new bungalow, corner of Bella Vista Street and Prospect Avenue, entertained a number of her inmates at tea. Ma Pettengill and I here quickly agreed that the proofreading on the Recorder was not all it should be. Then she unctuously read me a longer item from another column which was signed "The Lounger in the Lobby":

"Mr. Benjamin P. Sutton, the wealthy capitalist of Nome, Alaska, and a prince of good fellows, is again in our midst for his annual visit to His Honour Alonzo Price, Red Gap's present mayor, of whom he is an old-time friend and associate. Mr. Sutton, who is the picture of health, brings glowing reports from the North and is firm in his belief that Alaska will at no distant day become the garden spot of the world. In the course of a brief interview he confided to ye scribe that on his present trip to the outside he would not again revisit his birthplace, the city of New York, as he did last year. 'Once was enough, for many reasons,' said Mr. Sutton grimly. 'They call it "Little old New York," but it isn't little and it isn't old. It's big and it's new—we have older buildings right in Nome than any you can find on Broadway. Since my brief sojourn there last year I have decided that our people before going to New York should see America first.'"

"Now what do you think of that?" demanded the lady. I said I would be able to think little of it unless I were told the precise reasons for this rather brutal abuse of a great city. What, indeed, were the "many reasons" that Mr. Sutton had grudgingly not confided to the scribe?

Ma Pettengill chuckled and reread parts of the indictment. Thereafter she again chuckled fluently and uttered broken phrases to herself. "Horse-car" was one; "the only born New Yorker alive" was another. It became necessary for me to remind the woman that a guest was present. I did this by shifting my chair to face the stone fireplace in which a pine chunk glowed, and by coughing in a delicate and expectant manner.

"Poor Ben!" she murmured—"going all the way down there just to get one romantic look at his old home after being gone twenty-five years. I don't blame him for talking rough about the town, nor for his criminal act—stealing a street-car track."

It sounded piquant—a noble theft indeed! I now murmured a bit myself, striving to convey an active incredulity that yet might be vanquished by facts. The lady quite ignored this, diverging to her own opinion of New York. She tore the wrapper from a Sunday issue of a famous metropolitan daily and flaunted its comic supplement at me. "That's how I always think of New York," said she—"a kind of a comic supplement to the rest of this great country. Here—see these two comical little tots standing on their uncle's stomach and chopping his heart out with their axes—after you got the town sized up it's just that funny and horrible. It's like the music I heard that time at a higher concert I was dragged in Boston—ingenious but unpleasant."

But this was not what I would sit up for after a hard day's fishing—this coarse disparagement of something the poor creature was unfitted to comprehend.

"Ben Sutton," I remarked firmly.

"The inhabitants of New York are divided fifty-fifty between them that are trying to get what you got and them that think you're trying to get what they got."

"Ben Sutton," I repeated, trying to make it sullen.

"Ask a man on the street in New York where such and such a building is and he'll edge out of reaching distance, with his hand on his watch, before he tells you he don't know. In Denver, or San

Francisco now, the man will most likely walk a block or two with you just to make sure you get the directions right."

"Ben Sutton!"

"They'll fall for raw stuff, though. I know a slick mining promoter from Arizona that stops at the biggest hotel on Fifth Avenue and has himself paged by the boys about twenty times a day so folks will know how important he is. He'll get up from his table in the restaurant and follow the boy out in a way to make 'em think that nine million dollars is at stake. He tells me it helps him a lot in landing the wise ones."

"Stole a street-car track," I muttered desperately.

"The typical New Yorker, like they call him, was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and sleeps in New Rochelle, going in on the 8:12 and coming out on the——"

"I had a pretty fight landing that biggest one this afternoon, from that pool under the falls up above the big bend. Twice I thought I'd lost him, but he was only hiding—and then I found I'd forgotten my landing net. Say, did I ever tell you about the time I was fishing for steel head down in Oregon, and the bear——" The lady hereupon raised a hushing hand.

Well, as I was saying, Ben Sutton blew into town early last September and after shaking hands with his old confederate, Lon Price, he says how is the good wife and is she at home and Lon says no; that Pettikins has been up at Silver Springs resting for a couple weeks; so Ben says it's too bad he'll miss the little lady, as in that case he has something good to suggest, which is, what's the matter with him and Lon taking a swift hike down to New York which Ben ain't seen since 1892, though he was born there, and he'd now like to have a look at the old home in Lon's company. Lon says it's too bad Pettikins ain't there to go along, but if they start at once she wouldn't have time to join them, and Ben says he can start near enough at once for that, so hurry and pack the suitcase. Lon does it, leaving a delayed telegram to Henrietta to be sent after they start, begging her to join them if not too late, which it would be.

While they are in Louis Meyer's Place feeling good over this coop, in comes the ever care-free Jeff Tuttle and Jeff says he

wouldn't mind going out on rodeo himself with 'em, at least as far as Jersey City where he has a dear old aunt living—or she did live there when he was a little boy and was always very nice to him and he ain't done right in not going to see her for thirty years—and if he's that close to the big town he could run over from Jersey City for a look-see.

Lon and Ben hail his generous decision with cheers and on the way to another place they meet me, just down from the ranch. And why don't I come along with the bunch? Ben has it all fixed in ten seconds, he being one of these talkers that will odd things along till they sound even, and the other two chiming in with him and wanting to buy my ticket right then. But I hesitated some. Lon and Ben Sutton was all right to go with, but Jeff Tuttle was a different kittle of fish. Jeff is a decent man in many respects and seems real refined when you first meet him if it's in some one's parlour, but he ain't one you'd care to follow step by step through the mazes and pitfalls and palmrooms of a great city if you're sensitive to public notice. Still, they was all so hearty in their urging, Ben saying I was the only lady in the world he could travel that far with and not want to strangle, and Lon says he'd rather have me than most of the men he knew, and Jeff says if I'll consent to go he'll take his full-dress suit so as to escort me to operas and lectures in a classy manner, and at last I give up. I said I'd horn in on their party since none of 'em seemed hostile.

I'd meant to go a little later anyway, for some gowns I needed and some shopping I'd promised to do for Lizzie Gunslaugh. You got to hand it to New York for shopping. Why, I'd as soon buy an evening gown in Los Angeles as in Portland or San Francisco. Take this same Lizzie Gunslaugh. She used to make a bare living, with her sign reading "Plain and Fashionable Dressmaking." But I took that girl down to New York twice with me and showed her how and what to buy there, instead of going to Spokane for her styles, and to-day she's got a thriving little business—"Madame Elizabeth, Robes et Manteaux." Yes, sir; New York has at least one real reason for taking up room. That's a thing I always try to get into Ben Sutton's head, that he'd ought to buy his clothes down there instead of getting 'em from a reckless devil-dare of a tailor up in Seattle that will do anything in the world Ben tells him to—and

he tells him a plenty, believe me. He won't ever wear a dress suit, either, because he says that costume makes all men look alike and he ain't going to stifle his individuality. If you seen Ben's figure once you'd know that nothing could make him look like any one else, him being built on the lines of a grain elevator and having individuality no clothes on earth could stifle. He's the very last man on earth that should have coloured braid on his check suits. However!

My trunk is packed in a hurry and I'm down to the 6:10 on time. Lon is very scared and jubilant over deserting Henrietta in this furtive way, and Ben is all ebullient in a new suit that looks like a lodge regalia and Jeff Tuttle in plain clothes is as happy as a child. When I get there he's already begun to give his imitation of a Sioux squaw with a hare lip reciting "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night" in her native language, which he pulls on all occasions when he's feeling too good. It's some imitation. The Sioux language, even when spoken by a trained elocutionist, can't be anything dulcet. Jeff's stunt makes it sound like grinding coffee and shovelling coal into a cellar at the same time. Anyway, our journey begun happily and proved to be a good one, the days passing pleasantly while we talked over old times and played ten-cent limit in my stateroom, though Jeff Tuttle is so untravelled that he'll actually complain about the food and service in a dining-car. The poor puzzled old cow-man still thinks you ought to get a good meal in one, like the pretty bill of fare says you can.

Then one morning we was in New York and Ben Sutton got his first shock. He believed he was still on the other side of the river because he hadn't rid in a ferryboat yet. He had to be told sharply by parties in uniform. But we got him safe to a nice tall hotel on Broadway at last. Talk about your hicks from the brush—Ben was it, coming back to this here birthplace of his. He fell into a daze on the short ride to the hotel—after insisting hotly that we should go to one that was pulled down ten years ago—and he never did get out of it all that day.

Lon and Jeff was dazed, too. The city filled 'em with awe and they made no pretense to the contrary. About all they did that day was to buy picture cards and a few drinks. They was afraid to wander very far from the hotel for fear they'd get run over or

arrested or fall into the new subway or something calamitous like that. Of course New York was looking as usual, the streets being full of tired voters tearing up the car-tracks and digging first-line trenches and so forth.

It was a quiet day for all of us, though I got my shopping started, and at night we met at the hotel and had a lonesome dinner. We was all too dazed and tired to feel like larking about any, and poor Ben was so downright depressed it was pathetic. Ever read the story about a man going to sleep and waking up in a glass case in a museum a thousand years later? That was Ben coming back to his old town after only twenty-five years. He hadn't been able to find a single old friend nor any familiar faces. He ordered a porterhouse steak, family style, for himself, but he was so mournful he couldn't eat more than about two dollars' worth of it. He kept forgetting himself in dismal reminiscences. The only right thing he'd found was the men tearing up the streets. That was just like they used to be, he said. He maundered on to us about how horse-cars was running on Broadway when he left and how they hardly bothered to light the lamps north of Forty-second Street, and he wished he could have some fish balls like the old Sinclair House used to have for its free lunch, and how in them golden days people that had been born right here in New York was seen so frequently that they created no sensation.

He was feeling awful desolate about this. He pointed out different parties at tables around us, saying they was merchant princes from Sandusky or prominent Elks from Omaha or roystering blades from Pittsburgh or boulevardiers from Bucyrus—not a New Yorker in sight. He said he'd been reading where a wealthy nut had sent out an expedition to the North Pole to capture a certain kind of Arctic flea that haunts only a certain rare fox—but he'd bet a born New Yorker was harder to find. He said what this millionaire defective ought to of done with his inherited wealth was to find a male and female born here and have 'em stuffed and mounted under glass in a fire-proof museum, which would be a far more exciting spectacle than any flea on earth, however scarce and arctic. He said he'd asked at least forty men that day where they was born—waiters, taxi-drivers, hotel clerks, bartenders, and just anybody that would stop and take one with him, and not a



soul had been born nearer to the old town than Scranton, Pennsylvania. "It's heart-rending," he says, "to reflect that I'm alone here in this big city of outlanders. I haven't even had the nerve to go down to West Ninth Street for a look at the old home that shelters my boyhood memories. If I could find only one born New Yorker it would brace me up a whole lot."

It was one dull evening, under this cloud that enveloped Ben. We didn't even go to a show, but turned in early. Lon Price sent a picture card of the Flatiron Building to Henrietta telling her he was having a dreary time and he was not glad he'd been disappointed about her not coming, so love and kisses from her lonesome boy. It was what he would of sent her anyway, but it happened to be the truth so far.

Well, I got the long night's rest that was coming to me and started out early in the A. M. to pit my cunning against the wiles of the New York department stores, having had my evil desires inflamed the day before by an afternoon gown in chiffon velvet and Georgette crepe with silver embroidery and fur trimming that I'd seen in a window marked down to \$198.98. I fell for that all right, and for an all-silk jersey sport suit at \$29.98 and a demi-tailored walking suit for a mere bagatelle, and a white corduroy sport blouse and a couple of imported evening gowns they robbed me on—but I didn't mind. You expect to be robbed for anything really good in New York, only the imitation stuff that's worn by the idle poor being cheaper than elsewhere. And I was so busy in this whirl of extortion that I forgot all about the boys and their troubles till I got back to the hotel at five o'clock.

I find 'em in the palm grill, or whatever it's called, drinking stingers. But now they was not only more cheerful than they had been the night before but they was getting a little bit contemptuous and Western about the great city. Lon had met a brother real estate shark from Salt Lake and Jeff had fell in with a sheep man from Laramie—and treated him like an equal because of meeting him so far from home in a strange town where no one would find it out on him—and Ben Sutton had met up with his old friend Jake Berger, also from Nome. That's one nice thing about New York; you keep meeting people from out your way that are lonesome, too. Lon's friend and Jeff's sheep man had had

to leave, being encumbered by watchful-waiting wives that were having 'em paged every three minutes and wouldn't believe the boy when he said they was out. But Ben's friend, Jake Berger, was still at the table. Jake is a good soul, kind of a short, round, silent man, never opening his head for any length of time. He seems to bring the silence of the frozen North down with him except for brief words to the waiter ever and anon.

As I say, the boys was all more cheerful and contemptuous about New York by this time. Ben had spent another day asking casual parties if they was born in New York and having no more luck than a rabbit, but it seemed like he'd got hardened to these disappointments. He said he might leave his own self to a museum in due time, so future generations would know at least what the male New Yorker looked like. As for the female, he said any of these blondes along Broadway could be made to look near enough like his mate by a skilled taxidermist. Jeff Tuttle here says that they wasn't all blondes because he'd seen a certain brunette that afternoon right in this palm grill that was certainly worth preserving for all eternity in the grandest museum on earth—which showed that Jeff had chirked up a lot since landing in town. Ben said he had used the term "blonde" merely to designate a species and they let it go at that.

Lon Price then said he'd been talking a little himself to people he met in different places and they might not be born New Yorkers but they certainly didn't know anything beyond the city limits. At this he looks around at the crowded tables in this palm grill and says very bitterly that he'll give any of us fifty to one they ain't a person in the place that ever so much as even heard of Price's Addition to Red Gap. And so the talk went for a little, with Jake Berger ever and again crooning to the waiter for another round of stingers. I'd had two, so I stayed out on the last round. I told Jake I enjoyed his hospitality but two would be all I could think under till they learned to leave the dash of chloroform out of mine. Jake just looked kindly at me. He's as chatty as Mount McKinley.

But I was glad to see the boys more cheerful, so I said I'd get my lumpiest jewels out of the safe and put a maid and hairdresser to work on me so I'd be a credit to 'em at dinner and then we'd

spend a jolly evening at some show. Jeff said he'd also doll up in his dress suit and get shaved and manicured and everything, so he'd look like one in my own walk of life. Ben was already dressed for evening. He had on a totally new suit of large black and white checks looking like a hotel floor from a little distance, bound with braid of a quiet brown, and with a vest of wide stripes in green and mustard colour. It was a suit that the automobile law in some states would have compelled him to put dimmers on; it made him look egregious, if that's the word; but I knew it was no good appealing to his better nature. He said he'd have dinner ordered for us in another palm grill that had more palms in it.

Jake Berger spoke up for the first time to any one but a waiter. He asked why a palm room necessarily? He said the tropic influence of these palms must affect the waiters that had to stand under 'em all day, because they wouldn't take his orders fast enough. He said the languorous Southern atmosphere give 'em pellagra or something. Jeff Tuttle says Jake must be mistaken because the pellagra is a kind of a Spanish dance, he believes. Jake said maybe so; maybe it was tropic neurasthenia the waiters got. Ben said he'd sure look out for a fresh waiter that hadn't been infected yet. When I left 'em Jake was holding a split-second watch on the waiter he'd just given an order to.

By seven P. M. I'd been made into a work of art by the hotel help and might of been observed progressing through the palatial lobby with my purple and gold opera cloak sort of falling away from the shoulders. Jeff Tuttle observed me for one. He was in his dress suit all right, standing over in a corner having a bell-hop tie his tie for him that he never can learn to do himself. That's the way with Jeff; he simply wasn't born for the higher hotel life. In his dress suit he looks exactly like this here society burglar you're always seeing a picture of in the papers. However, I let him trail me along into this jewelled palm room with tapestries and onyx pillars and prices for food like the town had been three years beleaguered by an invading army. Jake Berger is alone at our table sipping a stinger and looking embarrassed because he'll have to say something. He gets it over as soon as he can. He says Ben has ordered dinner and stepped out and that Lon has stepped out to look for him but they'll both be back in a minute, so set down

and order one before this new waiter is overcome by the tropic miasma. We do the same, and in comes Lon looking very excited in the dress suit he was married in back about 1884.

"Ben's found one," he squeals excitedly—"a real genuine one that was born right here in New York and is still living in the same house he was born in. What do you know about that? Ben is frantic with delight and is going to bring him to dine with us as soon as he gets him brushed off down in the wash room and maybe a drink or two thrown into him to revive him from the shock of Ben running across him. Ain't it good, though! Poor old Ben, looking for a born one and thinking he'd never find him and now he has!"

We all said how glad we was for Ben's sake and Lon called over a titled aristocrat of foreign birth and ordered him to lay another place at the table. Then he tells us how the encounter happened. Ben had stepped out on Broadway to buy an evening paper and coming back he was sneaking a look at his new suit in a plate-glass window, walking blindly ahead at the same time. That's the difference between the sexes in front of a plate-glass window. A woman is entirely honest and shameless; she'll stop dead and look herself over and touch up anything that needs it as cool as if she was the last human on earth; while man, the coward, walks by slow and takes a long sly look at himself, turning his head more and more till he gets swore at by some one he's tramped on. This is how Ben had run across the only genuine New Yorker that seemed to be left. He'd run across his left instep and then bore him to the ground like one of these juggernauts or whatever they are. Still, at that, it seemed kind of a romantic meeting, like mebbe the hand of fate was in it. We chatted along, waiting for the happy pair, and Jake ordered again to be on the safe side because the waiter would be sure to contract hookworm or sleeping sickness in this tropic jungle before the evening was over. Jeff Tuttle said this was called the Louis Chateau room and he liked it. He also said, looking over the people that come in, that he bet every dress suit in town was hired to-night. Then in a minute or two more, after Jake Berger sent a bill over to the orchestra leader with a card asking him to play all quick tunes so the waiters could fight better against jungle fever, in comes Ben Sutton driving his

captive New Yorker before him and looking as flushed and proud as if he'd discovered a strange new vest pattern.

The captive wasn't so much to look at. He was kind of neat, dressed in one of the nobby suits that look like ninety dollars in the picture and cost eighteen; he had one of these smooth ironed faces that made him look thirty or forty years old, like all New York men, and he had the conventional glue on his hair. He was limping noticeably where Ben had run across him, and I could see he was highly suspicious of the whole gang of us, including the man who had treated him like he was a cockroach. But Ben had been persuasive and imperious—took him off his feet, like you might say—so he shook hands all around and ventured to set down with us. He had the same cold, slippery cautious hand that every New York man gives you the first time so I says to myself he's a real one all right and we fell to the new round of stingers Jake had motioned for, and to the nouveaux art-work food that now came along.

Naturally Ben and the New Yorker done most of the talking at first; about how the good old town had changed; how they was just putting up the Cable Building at Houston Street when Ben left in '92, and wasn't the old Everett House a good place for lunch, and did the other one remember Barnum's Museum at Broadway and Ann, and Niblo's Garden was still there when Ben was, and a lot of fascinating memories like that. The New Yorker didn't relax much at first and got distinctly nervous when he saw the costly food and heard Ben order vintage champagne which he always picks out by the price on the wine list. I could see him plain as day wondering just what kind of crooks we could be, what our game was and how soon we'd spring it on him—or would we mebbe stick him for the dinner check? He didn't have a bit good time at first, so us four others kind of left Ben to fawn upon him and enjoyed ourselves in our own way.

It was all quite elevating or vicious, what with the orchestra and the singers and the dancing and the waiters with vitality still unimpaired. And New York has improved a lot, I'll say that. The time I was there before they wouldn't let a lady smoke except in the very lowest table d'hotes of the underworld at sixty cents with wine. And now the only one in the whole room that didn't light a

cigarette from time to time was a nervous dame in a highnecked black silk and a hat that was never made farther east than Altoona, that looked like she might be taking notes for a club paper on the attractions or iniquities of a great metropolis. Jeff Tuttle was fascinated by the dancing; he called it the "tungle" and some of it did look like that. And he claimed to be shocked by the flagrant way women opened up little silver boxes and applied the paints, oils, and putty in full view of the audience. He said he'd just as lief see a woman take out a manicure set and do her nails in public, and I assured him he probably would see it if he came down again next year, the way things was going—him talking that way that had had his white tie done in the open lobby; but men are such. Jake Berger just looked around kindly and didn't open his head till near the end of the meal. I thought he wasn't noticing anything at all till the orchestra put on a shadow number with dim purple lights.

"You'll notice they do that," says Jake, "whenever a lot of these people are ready to pay their checks. It saves fights, because no one can see if they're added right or not." That was pretty gabby for Jake. Then I listened again to Ben and his little pet. They was talking their way up the Bowery from Atlantic Garden and over to Harry Hill's Place which it seemed the New Yorker didn't remember, and Ben then recalled an old leper with gray whiskers and a skull cap that kept a drug store in Bleecker Street when Ben was a kid and spent most of his time watering down the sidewalk in front of his place with a hose so that ladies going by would have to raise their skirts out of the wet. His eyes was quite dim as he recalled these sacred boyhood memories.

The New Yorker had unbent a mite like he was going to see the mad adventure through at all costs, though still plainly worried about the dinner check. Ben now said that they two ought to found a New York club. He said there was all other kinds of clubs here—Ohio clubs and Southern clubs and Nebraska societies and Michigan circles and so on, that give large dinners every year, so why shouldn't there be a New York club; maybe they could scare up three or four others that was born here if they advertised. It would of course be the smallest club in the city or in the whole world for that matter. The New Yorker was kind of cold toward

this. It must of sounded like the scheme to get money out of him that he'd been expecting all along. Then the waiter brought the check, during another shadow number with red and purple lights, and this lad pulled out a change purse and said in a feeble voice that he supposed we was all paying share and share alike and would the waiter kindly figure out what his share was. Ben didn't even hear him. He peeled a large bill off a roll that made his new suit a bad fit in one place and he left a five on the plate when the change come. The watchful New Yorker now made his first full-hearted speech of the evening. He said that Ben was foolish not to of added up the check to see if it was right, and that half a dollar tip would of been ample for the waiter. Ben pretended not to hear this either, and started again on the dear old times. I says to myself I guess this one is a real New Yorker all right.

Lon Prince now says what's the matter with going to some corking good show because nothing good has come to Red Cap since the Parisian Blond Widows over a year ago and he's eager for entertainment. Ben says "Fine! And here's the wise boy that will steer us right. I bet he knows every show in town."

The New Yorker says he does and has just the play in mind for us, one that he had meant to see himself this very night because it has been endorsed by the drama league of which he is a regular member. Well, that sounded important, so Ben says "What did I tell you? Ain't we lucky to have a good old New Yorker to put us right on shows our first night out. We might have wasted our evening on a dead one."

So we're all delighted and go out and get in a couple of taxicabs, Ben and this city man going in the first one. When ours gets to the theatre Ben is paying the driver while the New Yorker feebly protests that he ought to pay his half of the bill, but Ben don't hear him and don't hear him again when he wants to pay for his own seat in the theatre. I got my first suspicion of this guy right there; for a genuine New Yorker he was too darned conscientious about paying his mere share of everything. You can say lots of things about New Yorkers, but all that I've ever met have been keenly and instantly sensitive to the presence of a determined buyer. Still I didn't think so much about it that moment. This one looked the part all right, with his slim clothes and his natty

cloth hat and the thin gold cigarette case held gracefully open. Then we get into the theatre. Of course Ben had bought a box, that being the only place, he says, that a gentleman can set, owing to the skimpy notions of theatre-seat builders. And we was all prepared for a merry evening at this entertainment which the wise New Yorker would be sure to know was a good one.

But that curtain hadn't been up three minutes before I get my next shock of disbelief about this well-known club man. You know what a good play means in New York: a rattling musical comedy with lively songs, a tenor naval lieutenant in a white uniform, some real funny comedians, and a lot of girls without their stockings on, and so forth. Any one that thinks of a play in New York thinks of that, don't he? And what do we get here and now? Why, we get a gruesome thing about a ruined home with the owner going bankrupt over the telephone that's connected with Wall Street, and a fluffy wife that has a magnetic gentleman friend in a sport suit, and a lady crook that has had husband in her toils, only he sees it all now, and tears and strangulations and divorce, and a faithful old butler that suffers keenly and would go on doing it without a cent of wages if he could only bring every one together again, and a shot up in the bathroom or somewhere and gripping moments and so forth—I want to tell you we was all painfully shocked by this break of the knowing New Yorker. We could hardly believe it was true during the first act. Jeff Tuttle kept wanting to know when the girls was coming on, and didn't they have a muscle dancer in this piece. Ben himself was highly embarrassed and even suspicious for a minute. He looks at the New Yorker sharply and says ain't that a crocheted necktie he's wearing, and the New Yorker says it is and was made for him by his aunt. But Ben ain't got the heart to question him any further. He puts away his base suspicions and tries to get the New Yorker to tell us all about what a good play this is so we'll feel more entertained. So the lad tells us the leading woman is a sterling actress of legitimate methods—all too hard to find in this day of sensationalism, and the play is a triumph of advanced realism written by a serious student of the drama that is trying to save our stage from commercial degradation. He explained a lot about the lesson of the play. Near as I could make out the



lesson was that divorce, nowadays, is darned near as uncertain as marriage itself.

"The husband," explains the lad kindly, "is suspected by his wife to have been leading a double life, though of course he was never guilty of more than an indiscretion——"

Jake Berger here exploded rudely into speech again. "That wife is leading a double chin," says Jake.

"Say, people," says Lon Price, "mebbe it ain't too late to go to a show this evening."

But the curtain went up for the second act and nobody had the nerve to escape. There continued to be low murmurs of rebellion, just the same, and we all lost track of this here infamy that was occurring on the stage.

"I'm sure going to beat it in one minute," says Jeff Tuttle, "if one of 'em don't exclaim: 'Oh, girls, here comes the little dancer!'"

"I know a black-face turn that could put this show on its feet," says Lon Price, "and that Waldo in the sport suit ain't any real reason why wives leave home—you can't tell me!"

"I dare say this leading woman needs a better vehicle," say the New Yorker in a hoarse whisper.

"I dare say it, too," says Jeff Tuttle in a still hoarser whisper. "A better vehicle! She needs a motor truck, and I'd order one quick if I thought she'd take it."

Of course this was not refined of Jeff. The New Yorker winced and loyal Ben glares at all of us that has been muttering, so we had to set there till the curtain went down on the ruined home where all was lost save honour—and looking like that would have to go, too, in the next act. But Ben saw it wasn't safe to push us any further so he now said this powerful play was too powerful for a bunch of lowbrows like us and we all rushed out into the open air. Everybody cheered up a lot when we got there—seeing the nice orderly street traffic without a gripping moment in it. Lon Price said it was too late to go to a theatre, so what could we do to pass the time till morning? Ben says he has a grand idea and we can carry it out fine with this New York man to guide us. His grand idea is that we all go down on the Bowery and visit tough dives where the foul creatures of the underworld consort and crime happens every minute or two. We was still mad enough

about that play to like the idea. A good legitimate murder would of done wonders for our drooping spirits. So Ben puts it up to the New Yorker and he says yes, he knows a vicious resort on the Bowery, but we'd ought to have a detective from central office along to protect us from assault. Ben says not at all—no detective—unless the joints has toughened up a lot since he used to infest 'em, and we all said we'd take a chance, so again we was in taxicabs. Us four in the second cab was now highly cynical about Ben's New Yorker. The general feeling was that sooner or later he would sink the ship.

Then we reach the dive he has picked out; a very dismal dive with a room back of the bar that had a few tables and a piano in it and a sweet-singing waiter. He was singing a song about home and mother, that in mem-o-ree he seemed to see, when we got to our table. A very gloomy and respectable haunt of vice it was, indeed. There was about a dozen male and female creatures of the underworld present sadly enjoying this here ballad and scowling at us for talking when we come in.

Jake Berger ordered, though finding you couldn't get stingers here and having to take two miner's inches of red whiskey, and the New Yorker begun to warn us in low tones that we was surrounded by danger on every hand—that we'd better pour our drink on the floor because it would be drugged, after which we would be robbed if not murdered and thrown out into the alley where we would then be arrested by grafting policemen. Even Ben was shocked by this warning. He asks the New Yorker again if he is sure he was born in the old town, and the lad says honest he was and has been living right here all these years in the same house he was born in. Ben is persuaded by these words and gives the singing waiter a five and tells him to try and lighten the gloom with a few crimes of violence or something. The New Yorker continued to set stiff in his chair, one hand on his watch and one on the pocket where his change purse was that he'd tried to pay his share of the taxicabs out of.

The gloom-stricken piano player now rattled off some ragtime and the depraved denizens about us got sadly up and danced to it. Say, it was the most formal and sedate dancing you ever see, with these gun men holding their guilty partners off at arm's length and

their faces all drawn down in lines of misery. They looked like they might be a bunch of strict Presbyterians that had resolved to throw all moral teaching to the winds for one purple moment let come what might. I want to tell you these depraved creatures of the underworld was darned near as depressing as that play had been. Even the second round of drinks didn't liven us up none because the waiter threw down his cigarette and sung another tearful song. This one was about a travelling man going into a gilded cabaret and ordering a port wine and a fair young girl come out to sing in short skirts that he recognized to be his boyhood's sweetheart Nell; so he sent a waiter to ask her if she had forgot the song she once did sing at her dear old mother's knee, or knees, and she hadn't forgot it and proved she hadn't, because the chorus was "Nearer My God to Thee" sung to ragtime; then the travelling man said she must be good and pure, so come on let's leave this place and they'd be wed.

Yes, sir; that's what Ben had got for his five, so this time he gave the waiter a twenty not to sing any more at all. The New Yorker was horrified at the sight of a man giving away money, but it was well spent and we begun to cheer up a little. Ben told the New Yorker about the time his dog team won the All Alaska Sweepstake Race, two hundred and six miles from Nome to Candle and back, the time being 76 hours, 16 minutes, and 28 seconds, and showed him the picture of his lead dog pasted in the back of his watch. And Jake Berger got real gabby at last and told the story about the old musher going up the White Horse Trail in a blizzard and meeting the Bishop, only he didn't know it was the Bishop. And the Bishop says, "How's the trail back of you, my friend?" and the old musher just swore with the utmost profanity for three straight minutes. Then he says to the Bishop, "And what's it like back of you?" and the Bishop says, "Just like that!" Jake here got embarrassed from talking so much and ordered another round of this squirrel poison we was getting, and Jeff Tuttle begun his imitation of the Sioux squaw with a hare lip reciting "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night." It was a pretty severe ordeal for the rest of us, but we was ready to endure much if it would make this low den seem more homelike. Only when Jeff got about halfway through the singing waiter comes up, greatly shocked, and says none of that in here because they run an orderly

place, and we been talking too loud anyway. This waiter had a skull exactly like a picture of one in a book I got that was dug up after three hundred thousand years and the scientific world couldn't ever agree whether it was an early man or a late ape. I decided I didn't care to linger in a place where a being with a head like this could pass on my diversions and offenses so I made a move to go. Jeff Tuttle says to this waiter, "Fie, fie upon you, Roscoe! We shall go to some respectable place where we can loosen up without being called for it." The waiter said he was sorry, but the Bowery wasn't Broadway. And the New Yorker whispered that it was just as well because we was lucky to get out of this dive with our lives and property—and even after that this anthropoid waiter come hurrying out to the taxis after us with my fur piece and my solid gold vanity-box that I'd left behind on a chair. This was a bitter blow to all of us after we'd been led to hope for outrages of an illegal character. The New Yorker was certainly making a misdeal every time he got the cards. None of us trusted him any more, though Ben was still loyal and sensitive about him, like he was an only child and from birth had not been like other children.

The lad now wanted to steer us into an Allied Bazaar that would still be open, because he'd promised to sell twenty tickets to it and had 'em on him untouched. But we shut down firmly on this. Even Ben was firm. He said the last bazaar he'd survived was their big church fair in Nome that lasted two nights and one day and the champagne booth alone took in six thousand dollars, and even the beer booth took in something like twelve hundred, and he didn't feel equal to another affair like that just yet.

So we landed uptown at a very swell joint full of tables and orchestras around a dancing floor and more palms—which is the national flower of New York—and about eighty or a hundred slightly inebriated debutantes and well-known Broadway social favourites and their gentlemen friends. And here everything seemed satisfactory at last, except to the New Yorker who said that the prices would be something shameful. However, no one was paying any attention to him by now. None of us but Ben cared a hoot where he had been born and most of us was sorry he had been at all.

Jake Berger bought a table for ten dollars, which was seven

more than it had ever cost the owner, and Ben ordered stuff for us, including a vintage champagne that the price of stuck out far enough beyond other prices on the wine list, and a porterhouse steak, family style, for himself, and everything seemed on a sane and rational basis again. It looked as if we might have a little enjoyment during the evening after all. It was a good lively place, with all these brilliant society people mingling up in the dance in a way that would of got 'em thrown out of that gangsters' haunt on the Bowery. Lon Price said he'd never witnessed so many human shoulder blades in his whole history and Jeff Tuttle sent off a lot of picture cards of this here ballroom or saloon that a waiter give him. The one he sent Egbert Floud showed the floor full of beautiful reckless women in the dance and prominent society matrons drinking highballs, and Jeff wrote on it, "This is my room; wish you was here." Jeff was getting right into the spirit of this bohemian night life; you could tell that. Lon Price also. In ten minutes Lon had made the acquaintance of a New York social leader at the next table and was dancing with her in an ardent or ribald manner before Ben had finished his steak.

I now noticed that the New Yorker was looking at his gun-metal watch about every two minutes with an expression of alarm. Jake Berger noticed it, too, and again leaned heavily on the conversation. "Not keeping you up, are we?" says Jake. And this continual watch business must of been getting on Ben's nerves, too, for now, having fought his steak to a finish, he says to his little guest that they two should put up their watches and match coins for 'em. The New Yorker was suspicious right off and looked Ben's watch over very carefully when Ben handed it to him. It was one of these thin gold ones that can be had any place for a hundred dollars and up. You could just see that New Yorker saying to himself, "So this is their game, is it?" But he works his nerve up to take a chance and gets a two-bit piece out of his change purse and they match. Ben wins the first time, which was to of settled it, but Ben says right quick that of course he had meant the best two out of three, which the New Yorker doesn't dispute for a minute, and they match again and Ben wins that, too, so there's nothing to do but take the New Yorker's watch away from him. He removes it carefully off a leather fob with a gilt acorn on it

and hands it slowly to Ben. It was one of these extra superior dollar watches that cost three dollars. The New Yorker looked very stung, indeed. You could hear him saying to himself, "Serves me right for gambling with a stranger!" Ben feels these suspicions and is hurt by 'em so he says to Jeff, just to show the New Yorker he's an honest sport, that he'll stake his two watches against Jeff's solid silver watch that he won in a bucking contest in 1890. Jeff says he's on; so they match and Ben wins again, now having three watches. Then Lon Price comes back from cavorting with this amiable jade of the younger dancing set at the next table and Ben makes him put up his gold seven-jewelled hunting-case watch against the three and Ben wins again, now having four watches.

Lon says "Easy come, easy go!" and moves over to the next table again to help out with the silver bucket of champagne he's ordered, taking Jeff Tuttle with him to present to his old friends that he's known for all of twenty minutes. The New Yorker is now more suspicious than ever of Ben; his wan beauty is marred by a cynical smile and his hair has come unglued in a couple of places. Ben is more sensitive than ever to these suspicions of his new pal so he calls on Jake Berger to match his watch against the four. Jake takes out his split-second repeater and him and Ben match coins and this time Ben is lucky enough to lose, thereby showing his dear old New Yorker that he ain't a crook after all. But the New Yorker still looks very shrewd and robbed and begins to gulp the champagne in a greedy manner. You can hear him calling Jake a confederate. Jake sees it plain enough, that the lad thinks he's been high-graded, so he calls over our waiter and crowds all five watches onto him. "Take these home to the little ones," says Jake, and dismisses the matter from his mind by putting a wine glass up to his ear and listening into it with a rapt expression that shows he's hearing the roar of the ocean up on Alaska's rock-bound coast.

The New Yorker is a mite puzzled by this, but I can see it don't take him long to figure out that the waiter is also a confederate. Anyway, he's been robbed of his watch forever and falls to the champagne again very eager and moody. It was plain he didn't know what a high-powered drink he was trifling with. And Ben was moody, too, by now. He quit recalling old times and sacred mem-

ories to the New Yorker. If the latter had tried to break up the party by leaving at this point I guess Ben would of let him go. But he didn't try; he just set there soggly drinking champagne to drown the memory of his lost watch. And pretty soon Ben has to order another quart of this twelve-dollar beverage. The New Yorker keeps right on with the new bottle, daring it to do its worst and it does; he was soon speaking out of a dense fog when he spoke at all.

With his old pal falling into this absent mood Ben throws off his own depression and mingles a bit with the table of old New York families where Lon Price is now paying the checks. They was the real New Yorkers; they'd never had a moment's distrust of Lon after he ordered the first time and told the waiter to keep the glasses brimming. Jeff Tuttle was now dancing in an extreme manner with a haggard society bud aged thirty-five, and only Jake and me was left at our table. We didn't count the New Yorker any longer; he was merely raising his glass to his lips at regular intervals. He moved something like an automatic chess player I once see. The time passed rapidly for a couple hours more, with Jake Berger keeping up his ceaseless chatter as usual. He did speak once, though, after an hour's silence. He said in an audible tone that the New Yorker was a human hangnail, no matter where he was born.

And so the golden moments flitted by, with me watching the crazy crowd, until they began to fall away and the waiters was piling chairs on the naked tables at the back of the room. Then with some difficulty we wrenched Ben and Lon and Jeff from the next table and got out into the crisp air of dawn. The New Yorker was now sunk deep in a trance and just stood where he was put, with his hat on the wrong way. The other boys had cheered up a lot owing to their late social career. Jeff Tuttle said it was all nonsense about its being hard to break into New York society, because look what he'd done in one brief evening without trying—and he flashed three cards on which telephone numbers is written in dainty feminine hands. He said if a modest and retiring stranger like himself could do that much, just think what an out-and-out social climber might achieve!

Right then I was ready to call it an absorbing and instructive evening and get to bed. But no! Ben Sutton at sight of his now

dazed New Yorker has resumed his brooding and suddenly announces that we must all make a pilgrimage to West Ninth Street and romantically view his old home which his father told him to get out of twenty-five years ago, and which we can observe by the first tender rays of dawn. He says he has been having precious illusions shattered all evening, but this will be a holy moment that nothing can queer—not even a born New Yorker that hasn't made the grade and is at this moment so vitrified that he'd be a mere glass crash if some one pushed him over.

I didn't want to go a bit. I could see that Jeff Tuttle would soon begin dragging a hip, and the streets at that hour was no place for Lon Price, with his naturally daring nature emphasized, as it were, from drinking this here imprisoned laughter of the man that owned the joint we had just left. But Ben was pleading in a broken voice for one sight of the old home with its boyhood memories clustering about its modest front and I was afraid he'd get to crying, so I give in wearily and we was once more encased in taxicabs and on our way to the sacred scene. Ben had quite an argument with the drivers when he give 'em the address. They kept telling him there wasn't a thing open down there, but he finally got his aim understood. The New Yorker's petrified remains was carefully tucked into the cab with Ben.

And Ben suffered another cruel blow at the end of the ride. He climbed out of the cab in a reverent manner, hoping to be overcome by the sight of the cherished old home, and what did he find? He just couldn't believe it at first. The dear old house had completely disappeared and in its place was a granite office building eighteen stories high. Ben just stood off and looked up at it, too overcome for words. Up near the top a monster brass sign in writing caught the silver light of dawn. The sign sprawled clear across the building and said PANTS EXCLUSIVELY. Still above this was the firm's name in the same medium—looking like a couple of them hard-lettered towns that get evacuated up in Poland.

Poor stricken Ben looked in silence a long time. We all felt his suffering and kept silent, too. Even Jeff Tuttle kept still—who all the way down had been singing about old Bill Bailey who played the Ukelele in Honolulu Town. It was a solemn moment.



After a few more minutes of silent grief Ben drew himself together and walked off without saying a word. I thought walking would be a good idea for all of us, especially Lon and Jeff, so Jake paid the taxi drivers and we followed on foot after the chief mourner. The fragile New Yorker had been exhumed and placed in an upright position and he walked, too, when he understood what was wanted of him; he didn't say a word, just did what was told him like one of these boys that the professor hypnotizes on the stage. I herded the bunch along about half a block back of Ben, feeling it was delicate to let him wallow alone in his emotions.

We got over to Broadway, turned up that, and worked on through that dinky little grass plot they call a square, kind of aimless like and wondering where Ben in his grief would lead us. The day was well begun by this time and the passing cars was full of very quiet people on their way to early work. Jake Berger said these New Yorkers would pay for it sooner or later, burning the candle at both ends this way—dancing all night and then starting off to work.

Then up a little way we catch sight of a regular old-fashioned horse-car going crosstown. Ben has stopped this and is talking excitedly to the driver so we hurry up and find he's trying to buy the car from the driver. Yes, sir; he says it's the last remnant of New York when it was little and old and he wants to take it back to Nome as a souvenir. Anybody might of thought he'd been drinking. He's got his roll out and wants to pay for the car right there. The driver is a cold-looking old boy with gray chin whiskers showing between his cap and his comforter and he's indignantly telling Ben it can't be done. By the time we get there the conductor has come around and wants to know what they're losing all this time for. He also says they can't sell Ben the car and says further that we'd all better go home and sleep it off, so Ben hands 'em each a ten spot, the driver lets off his brake, and the old ark rattles on while Ben's eyes is suffused with a suspicious moisture, as they say.

Ben now says we must stand right on this corner to watch these cars go by—about once every hour. We argued with him whilst we shivered in the bracing winelike air, but Ben was stubborn. We might of been there yet if something hadn't diverted him from this evil design. It was a string of about fifty Italians that just

then come out of a subway entrance. They very plainly belonged to the lower or labouring classes and I judged they was meant for work on the up-and-down street we stood on, that being already torn up recklessly till it looked like most other streets in the same town. They stood around talking in a delirious or Italian manner till their foreman unlocked a couple of big piano boxes. Out of these they took crowbars, adzes, shovels, and other instruments of their calling. Ben Sutton has been standing there soddenly waiting for another dear old horse-car to come by, but suddenly he takes notice of these bandits with the tools and I see an evil gleam come into his tired eyes. He assumes a business-like air, struts over to the foreman of the bunch, and has some quick words with him, making sweeping motions of the arm up and down the cross street where the horse-cars run. After a minute of this I'm darned if the whole bunch didn't scatter out and begin to tear up the pavement along the car track on this cross street. Ben tripped back to us looking cheerful once more.

"They wouldn't sell me the car," he says, "so I'm going to take back a bunch of the dear old rails. They'll be something to remind me of the dead past. Just think! I rode over those very rails when I was a tot."

We was all kind of took back at this, and I promptly warned Ben that we'd better beat it before we got pinched. But Ben is confident. He says no crime could be safer in New York than setting a bunch of Italians to tearing up a street-car track; that no one could ever possibly suspect it wasn't all right, though he might have to be underhanded to some extent in getting his souvenir rails hauled off. He said he had told the foreman that he was the contractor's brother and had been sent with this new order and the foreman had naturally believed it, Ben looking like a rich contractor himself.

And there they was at work, busy as beavers, gouging up the very last remnant of little old New York when it was that. Ben rubbed his hands in ecstasy and pranced up and down watching 'em for awhile. Then he went over and told the foreman there'd be extra pay for all hands if they got a whole block tore up by noon, because this was a rush job. Hundreds of people was passing, mind you, including a policeman now and then, but no one took any notice of a sight so usual. All the same the rest of us edged

north about half a block, ready to make a quick getaway. Ben kept telling us we was foolishly scared. He offered to bet any one in the party ten to one in thousands that he could switch his gang over to Broadway and have a block of that track up before any one got wise. There was no takers.

Ben was now so pleased with himself and his little band of faithful workers that he even begun to feel kindly again toward his New Yorker who was still standing in one spot with glazed eyes. He goes up and tries to engage him in conversation, but the lad can't hear any more than he can see. Ben's efforts, however, finally start him to muttering something. He says it over and over to himself and at last we make out what it is. He is saying: "I'd like to buy a little drink for the party m'self."

"The poor creature is delirious," says Jake Berger.

But Ben slaps him on the back and tells him he's a good sport and he'll give him a couple of these rails to take to his old New York home; he says they can be crossed over the mantel and will look very quaint. The lad kind of shivered under Ben's hearty blow and seemed to struggle out of his trance for a minute. His eyes unglazed and he looks around and says how did he get here and where is it? Ben tells him he's among friends and that they two are the only born New Yorkers left in the world, and so on, when the lad reaches into the pocket of his natty topcoat for a handkerchief and pulls out with it a string of funny little tickets—about two feet of 'em. Ben grabs these up with a strange look in his eyes.

"Bridge tickets!" he yells. Then he grabs his born New Yorker by the shoulders and shakes him still further out of dream-land.

"What street in New York is your old home on?" he demands savagely. The lad blinks his fishy eyes and fixes his hat on that Ben has shook loose.

"Cranberry Street," says he.

"Cranberry Street! Hell, that's Brooklyn, and you claimed New York," says Ben, shaking the hat loose again.

"Greater New York," says the lad pathetically, and pulls his hat firmly down over his ears.

Ben looked at the imposter with horror in his eyes. "Brooklyn!"

he muttered—"the city of the unburied dead! So that was the secret of your strange behaviour? And me warning you in my bosom, you viper!"

But the crook couldn't hear him again, having lapsed into his trance and become entirely rigid and foolish. In the cold light of day his face now looked like a plaster cast of itself. Ben turned to us with a hunted look. "Blow after blow has fallen upon me to-night," he says tearfully, "but this is the most cruel of all. I can't believe in anything after this. I can't even believe them street-car rails are the originals. Probably they were put down last week."

"Then let's get out of this quick," I say to him. "We've been exposing ourselves to arrest here long enough for a bit of false sentiment on your part."

"I gladly go," says Ben, "but wait one second." He stealthily approaches the Greater New Yorker and shivers him to wakefulness with another hearty wallop on the back. "Listen carefully," says Ben as the lad struggles out of the dense fog. "Do you see those workmen tearing up that car-track?"

"Yes, I see it," says the lad distinctly. "I've often seen it."

"Very well. Listen to me and remember your life may hang on it. You go over there and stand right by them till they get that track up and don't you let any one stop them. Do you hear? Stand right there and make them work, and if a policeman or any one tries to make trouble you soak him. Remember! I'm leaving those men in your charge. I shall hold you personally responsible for them."

The lad don't say a word but begins to walk in a brittle manner toward the labourers. We saw him stop and point a threatening finger at them, then instantly freeze once more. It was our last look at him. We got everybody on a north-bound car with some trouble. Lon Price had gone to sleep standing up and Jeff Tuttle, who was now looking like the society burglar after a tough night's work at his trade, was getting turbulent and thirsty. He didn't want to ride on a common street car. "I want a tashicrab," he says, "and I want to go back to that Louis Chateau room and dance the tangle." But we persuaded him and got safe up to a restaurant on Sixth Avenue where breakfast was had by all without further adventure. Jeff strongly objected to this restaurant at first,

though, because he couldn't hear an orchestra in it. He said he couldn't eat his breakfast without an orchestra. He did, however, ordering apple pie and ice cream and a gin fizz to come. Lon Price was soon sleeping like a tired child over his ham and eggs, and Jeff went night-night, too, before his second gin fizz arrived.

Ben ordered a porterhouse steak, family style, consuming it in a moody rage like a man that has been ground-sluiced at every turn. He said he felt like ending it all and sometimes wished he'd been in the cab that plunged into one of the forty-foot holes in Broadway a couple of nights before. Jake Berger had ordered catfish and waffles, with a glass of Invalid port. He burst into speech once more, too. He said the nights in New York were too short to get much done. That if they only had night as long as Alaska the town might become famous. "As it is," he says, "I don't mind flirting with this city now and then, but I wouldn't want to marry it."

Well, that about finished the evening, with Lon and Jeff making the room sound like a Pullman palace car at midnight. Oh, yes; there was one thing more. On the day after the events recorded in the last chapter, as it says in novels, there was a piece in one of the live newspapers telling that a well-dressed man of thirty-five, calling himself Clifford J. Hotchkiss and giving a Brooklyn address, was picked up in a dazed condition by patrolman Cohen who had found him attempting to direct the operations of a gang of workmen engaged in repairing a crosstown-car track. He had been sent to the detention ward of Bellevue to await examination as to his sanity, though insisting that he was the victim of a gang of footpads who had plied him with liquor and robbed him of his watch. I showed the piece to Ben Sutton and Ben sent him up a pillow of forget-me-nots with "Rest" spelled on it—without the sender's card.

No; not a word in it about the street-car track being wrongfully tore up. I guess it was like Ben said; no one ever would find out about that in New York. My lands! here it is ten-thirty and I got to be on the job when them hayers start to-morrow A. M. A body would think I hadn't a care on earth when I get started on anecdotes of my past.

# THE LITTLE RED KITTEN

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LAFCADIO HEARN

BORN: On the Ionian Island of Santa Maura, June 27, 1850.

DIED. Japan, September 26, 1904.

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THE KITTEN would have looked like a small red lion, but that its ears were positively enormous,—making the head like one of those little demons sculptured in mediaeval stonework which have wings instead of ears. It ate beefsteak and cockroaches, caterpillars and fish, chicken and butterflies, mosquito-hawks and roast mut-ton, hash and tumble-bugs, beetles and pigs' feet, crabs and spiders, moths and poached eggs, oysters and earthworms, ham and mice, rats and rice pudding,—until its belly became a realization of Noah's Ark. On this diet it soon acquired strength to whip all the ancient cats in the neighborhood, and also to take under its protection a pretty little salmon-colored cat of the same sex, which was too weak to defend itself and had been unmercifully mauled every night before the tawny sister enforced reform in the shady yard of the old Creole house. The red kitten was not very big, but was very solid and more agile than a monkey. Its flaming emerald eyes were always watching, and its enormous ears always on the alert; and woe to the cat who dared approach the weak little sister with hostile intentions. The two always slept together—the little speckled one resting its head upon the body of its protector; and the red kitten licked its companion every day like a mother washing her baby. Wherever the red kitten went the speckled kitten followed; they hunted all kinds of creeping things together, and even formed a criminal partnership in kitten stealing. One day they were forcibly separated; the red kitten being locked

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New Orleans Item September 24, 1879.

up in the closet under the stairs to keep it out of mischief during dinner hours, as it had evinced an insolent determination to steal a stuffed crab from the plate of Madame R. Thus temporarily deprived of its guide, philosopher, and friend, the speckled kitten unfortunately wandered under a rocking-chair violently agitated by a heavy gentleman who was reading the "Bee"; and with a sharp little cry of agony it gave up its gentle ghost. Everybody stopped eating; and there was a general outburst of indignation and sorrow. The heavy gentleman got very red in the face, and said he had not intended to do it. "*Tonnerre d'une pipe;—nom d'un petit bonhomme!*"—he might have been a little more careful! . . . An hour later the red kitten was vainly seeking its speckled companion—all ears and eyes. It uttered strange little cries, and vainly waited for the customary reply. Then it commenced to look everywhere—upstairs, downstairs, on the galleries, in the corners, among the shrubbery, never supposing in its innocent mind that a little speckled body was lying far away upon a heap of garbage and ashes. Then it became very silent; purring when offered food, but eating nothing. . . . At last a sudden thought seemed to strike it. It had never seen the great world which rumbled beyond the archway of the old courtyard; perhaps its little sister had wandered out there. So it would go and seek her. For the first time it wandered beyond the archway and saw the big world it had never seen before—miles of houses and myriads of people and great cotton-floats thundering by, and great wicked dogs which murder kittens. But the little red one crept along beside the houses in the narrow strip of shadow, sometimes trembling when the big wagons rolled past, and sometimes hiding in doorways when it saw a dog, but still bravely seeking the lost sister. . . . It came to a great wide street—five times wider than the narrow street before the old Creole house; and the sun was so hot, so hot. The little creature was so tired and hungry, too. Perhaps somebody would help it to find the way. But nobody seemed to notice the red kitten, with its funny ears and great bright eyes. It opened its little pink mouth and cried; but nobody stopped. It could not understand that. Whenever it had cried that way at home, somebody had come to pet it. Suddenly a fire-engine came roaring up the street, and a great crowd of people

were running after it. Then the kitten got very, very frightened; and tried to run out of the way, but its poor little brain was so confused and there was so much noise and shouting. . . . Next morning two little bodies lay side by side on the ashes—miles away from the old Creole house. The little tawny kitten had found its speckled sister.



## THE BLACK CUPID

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LAFCADIO HEARN

*Item, July 29, 1880. Both included in *Fantastics and Other Fancies*, 1919.*

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THERE WAS A SMALL picture hanging in the room; and I took the light to examine it. I do not know why I could not sleep. Perhaps it was the excitement of travel.

The gilded frame, massive and richly moulded, inclosed one of the strangest paintings I had ever seen, a woman's head lying on a velvet pillow, one arm raised and one bare shoulder with part of a beautiful bosom relieved against a dark background. As I said, the painting was small. The young woman was evidently reclining upon her right side; but only her head, elevated upon the velvet pillow, her white throat, one beautiful arm and part of the bosom was visible.

With consummate art the painter had contrived that the spectator should feel as though leaning over the edge of the couch—not visible in the picture—so as to bring his face close to the beautiful face on the pillow. It was one of the most charming heads a human being ever dreamed of;—such a delicate bloom on the cheeks;—such a soft, humid light in the half-closed eyes;—such sun-bright hair;—such carnation lips;—such an oval outline! And all this relieved against a deep black background. In the lobe of the left ear I noticed a curious earring—a tiny Cupid wrought in black jet, suspending himself by his bow, which he held by each end, as if trying to pull it away from the tiny gold chain which fettered it to the beautiful ear, delicate and faintly rosy as a seashell. What a strange earring it was! I wondered if the black Cupid presided over unlawful loves, unblest amours!

But the most curious thing about the picture was the attitude

and aspect of the beautiful woman. Her head, partly thrown back, with half-closed eyes and tender smile, seemed to be asking a kiss. The lips pouted expectantly. I almost fancied I could feel her perfumed breath. Under the rounded arm I noticed a silky floss of bright hair in tiny curls. The arm was raised as if to be flung about the neck of the person from whom the kiss was expected. I was astonished by the art of the painter. No photograph could have rendered such effects, however delicately colored; no photograph could have reproduced the gloss of the smooth shoulders, the veins, the smallest details! But the picture had a curious fascination. It produced an effect upon me as if I were looking at living beauty, a rosy and palpitating reality. Under the unsteady light of the lamp I once fancied that I saw the lips move, the eyes glisten! The head seemed to advance itself out of the canvas as though to be kissed. Perhaps it was very foolish; but I could not help kissing it—not once but a hundred times; and then I suddenly became frightened. Stories of bleeding statues and mysterious pictures and haunted tapestry came to my mind; and alone in a strange house and a strange city I felt oddly nervous. I placed the light on the table and went to bed.

But it was impossible to sleep. Whenever I began to doze a little, I saw the beautiful head on the pillow close beside me,—the same smile, the same lips, the golden hair, the silky floss under the caressing arm. I rose, dressed myself, lit a pipe, blew out the light, and smoked in the dark, until the faint blue tints of day stole in through the windows. Afar off I saw the white teeth of the Sierra flush rosily and heard the rumbling of awakening traffic.

"*Las cinco menos cuarto, señor,*" cried the servant as he knocked upon my door,—"*tiempo para levantarse.*"

Before leaving I asked the landlord about the picture.

He answered with a smile, "It was painted by a madman, *señor.*"

"But who?" I asked. "Mad or not, he was a master genius."

"I do not even remember his name. He is dead. They allowed him to paint in the madhouse. It kept his mind tranquil. I obtained the painting from his family after his death. They refused to accept money for it, saying they were glad to give it away."

I had forgotten all about the painting when some five years after I happened to be passing through a little street in Mexico City. My attention was suddenly attracted by some articles I saw in the window of a dingy shop, kept by a Spanish Jew. A pair of earrings—two little Cupids wrought in black jet, holding their bows above their heads, the bows being attached by slender gold chains to the hooks of the earrings!

I remembered the picture in a moment! And that night!

"I do not really care to sell them, *senor*," said the swarthy jeweler, "unless I get my price. You cannot get another pair like them. I know who made them! They were made for an artist who came here expressly with the design. He wished to make a present to a certain woman."

"*Una Mejicana?*"

"No, *Americana*."

"Fair, with dark eyes—about twenty, perhaps, at that time—a little rosy?"

"Why, did you know her? They used to call her *Josefita*. You know he killed her? Jealousy. They found her still smiling, as if she had been struck while asleep. A '*punal*.' I got the earrings back at a sale."

"And the artist?"

"Died at P——, mad! Some say he was mad when he killed her. If you really want the earrings, I will let you have them for sixty pesos. They cost a hundred and fifty."

## THE BEATIFIC VISION

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J. S. FLETCHER

BORN: Halifax, February 7, 1863. DIED: January 31, 1935.

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JOHNNY SAT IN THE SUNLIGHT, his eyes wearily blinking at a scant patch of shadow that lay over the dusty grass of the wayside. He had sat there in his shabby rocking-chair every fine day for some twenty years. To folks with the usual amount of brains, the years would have seemed long, dreary, and of an exceeding monotony. But Johnny, being a poor simpleton from his birth upward, scarce knew the difference between day and night. Early in the fine mornings his mother dressed him (using his father's cast-off garments for the purpose), fed him (as babies are fed), and set him in his chair outside the cottage door. There he flourished, like a cabbage or cauliflower, drinking in sunlight and fresh air. In the opinion of his rural neighbours it had been better if Johnny had never been born, and a merciful deliverance if Providence would only take him. Whether Johnny had any thoughts of his own upon these points who shall say? The fact remains that he lived a life of great vegetable luxury, positively flourishing in the sun, and making up in summer for the privations of winter. From April until October he lived outside the cottage; from October until April his seat was near the fire. Summer suited him best; it was his great recuperator, and he fattened on it. Johnny's mother put her head out of the door and looked at him. Johnny grinned broadly—it was the only form of expression that he had. Sometimes, if strongly moved, he would give vent to his feelings by making a curious boo-ing sound, but for ordinary

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In *God's Failures*, John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1897.

events the broad grin served. A stranger passing along the street might easily have taken him to be a perfectly sane person, for his smile was intelligent and his face attractive. It was only when you looked at his big blue eyes and saw the hopeless vacancy behind them, fixed in an unmeaning stare that never varied, that you saw Johnny in stern reality. Then perhaps you looked more closely and noticed his legs, dangling loose from his chair, and betraying a disposition to wander and wobble, or his fingers that played feebly with his stick—and then you knew him to be one of those beings who come into the world soulless.

When Johnny's mother's face withdrew, Johnny yawned and moved his head from one side to the other. He looked up the street; he looked down the street. His face wore the expression which you may see a thousand times a day in Bond Street—the expression of the utterly bored loungeur who looks at what he has seen a million times before. Up the street—the mill, its sails going round, round, round, round, round, round, round; the Gaping Goose, its sign swinging in the light breeze; the schoolhouse, its weathercock glittering in the sun; a row of cottages; the gables and roofs of a farmstead. Down the street—the rookery, with the young rooks risking their half-feathered necks at the edge of the nests; the towers of the Manor rising through the trees; the church spire; the village green, and the little pond that flashed in the sunlight. Johnny looked—up, down—up, down—and rubbed his nose in sheer vacuous unconcern. He had seen all these things a thousand times and ten thousand upon that. They were the extreme limits of his world. In his twenty years he had never travelled even as far as the duck-pond or the mill. There was a vague notion somewhere in his body that something lay beyond his little circle of vision, but he had no power to wonder what it might be. He fell back upon his favourite amusement of grinning at the shadows on the grass.

When Johnny next looked up the street, he saw rare things approaching. Over the crest of the hill came a great company such as his eyes had never seen before. It came like a cloud at first, and, growing larger, assumed the proportions of a great procession. Johnny began to feel a tender interest in this thing that moved steadily towards him. Never in his life had he seen

aught like it. He was always interested in the passing of a horse, and sometimes he had seen a little procession of four stone-wagons go by, and had boo-ed at them for pure delight. But this—why, already the advance-guard was abreast of the Gaping Goose, and still there were things coming over the hill-top half a mile beyond. Johnny looked, and looked, and at last lifted up his voice in one long, deep howl of joy.

“Boo—oo—oo—oo!” said Johnny.

Johnny’s mother ran out of the cottage; her neighbour appeared at the next door. They stared up the street, urged thereto by the vigorous waving of Johnny’s right arm.

“It’s t’ circus folk,” said the neighbour. “They’re bound to Cornchester. Sitha, Johnny!”

But Johnny needed no admonition. He gazed, and gazed, and gazed again. His blue eyes were big as saucers: his mouth stood agape. He saw rare things, and did not comprehend anything but that they were exceeding rare.

First there appeared men, riding in a gorgeous car drawn by many horses—black, brown, white, and piebald. The horses had exceeding long tails, and the men applied hands and mouths to shining things out of which came a divine music. The sound echoed and rang through the village. The schoolmaster and his flock appeared at the schoolhouse door; the farmers’ wives peeped out of the windows, and their daughters ran to the gates; the parson looked over his hedge, and the blacksmith came out of the forge; the geese by the pond rejoiced loudly, and the dogs that lay sleeping in the sun woke up and barked. Then Johnny’s mouth relaxed, and he joined the chorus.

“Boo—ooo-oo! Boo—boo—boo!” cried Johnny.

But now came wonderful matters. Great beasts walked solemnly by whose tails hung from between their eyes, and whose tread shook the little houses. They bore gorgeous things in scarlet and gold upon their backs, and in one of them rode a great man, with a shining crown upon his head and a flashing sword in his hand. Johnny’s mouth widened to a perfect O. But then followed other marvels. Beasts passed before him whose backs were fashioned with great humps, and whose feet trod softly in the powdery dust. A milk-white steed bore a black man, whose glittering teeth made

Johnny afraid until a beautiful lady with wings on her shoulders came by and smiled at him. Little cows, with crumpled horns, drew a tiny carriage; a beast with rings all over it was led by a beautiful gentleman in green and gold. And then came birds, great white birds, with long necks and legs, whose snowy plumage glittered in the sun. Houses on wheels, with wonderful pictures on the sides, passed by. In some of them were awful beasts that howled and roared and made Johnny afraid. But ere he had time to whimper came a company of merry gentlemen whose faces were painted in white and red, and whose clothes made Johnny think of the hangings round his grandmother's bed. He boo-ed with delight, and they smiled at him and cut an antic or two for his special benefit. And then came more solemn beasts, with their misplaced tails waving from side to side, and upon the head of one of them rode a curious little animal that wore a scarlet uniform, and mopped and mowed at the people; and so there was an end of it all, and Johnny sat staring at the last elephant as it wound up the great procession.

"Now, then, Johnny!" said the neighbour, "there's fine sights, surely!"

"Boo—oo, boo—oo!" said Johnny. "Boo—boo—boo—boooo!"

The last elephant disappeared beyond the green, the strident strains of the band grew faint and more faint. Johnny stretched his neck.

"Nay, lad," said Johnny's mother, "they're gone—thou's seen t' last on 'em."

But Johnny continued to gaze. When the last notes of the music had died away, and all the folk had gone back to their work or pleasure, he turned an inquiring eye on his mother. She, too, had returned to her washtub, and Johnny was alone. He heaved a deep sigh, and fell once more to smiling at the shadows as they danced in the grass.

# RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER

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NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

BORN: Salem, July 4, 1804. DIED: Near Plymouth, May 19, 1864.

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A YOUNG MAN named Giovanni Guasconti came very long ago from the more southern region of Italy to pursue his studies at the University of Padua. Giovanni, who had but a scanty supply of gold ducats in his pocket, took lodgings in a high and gloomy chamber of an old edifice which looked not unworthy to have been the palace of a Paduan noble, and which, in fact, exhibited over its entrance the armorial bearings of a family long since extinct. The young stranger, who was not unstudied in the great poem of his country, recollected that one of the ancestors of this family, and perhaps an occupant of this very mansion, had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his *Inferno*. These reminiscences and associations, together with the tendency to heartbreak natural to a young man for the first time out of his native sphere, caused Giovanni to sigh heavily as he looked around the desolate and ill-furnished apartment.

"Holy Virgin, signor!" cried old Dame Lisabetta, who, won by the youth's remarkable beauty of person, was kindly endeavoring to give the chamber a habitable air; "what a sigh was that to come out of a young man's heart! Do you find this old mansion gloomy? For the love of Heaven, then, put your head out of the window, and you will see as bright sunshine as you have left in Naples."

Guasconti mechanically did as the old woman advised, but could not quite agree with her that the Lombard sunshine was as cheerful as that of Southern Italy. Such as it was, however, it fell upon a garden beneath the window, and expended its fostering influences on a variety of plants which seemed to have been cultivated with exceeding care.



"Does this garden belong to the house?" asked Giovanni.

"Heaven forbid, signor, unless it were fruitful of better pot-herbs than any that grow there now," answered old Lisabetta. "No; that garden is cultivated by the own hands of Signor Giacomo Rappaccini, the famous doctor who, I warrant him, has been heard of as far as Naples. It is said that he distils these plants into medicines that are as potent as a charm. Oftentimes you may see the Signor Doctor at work, and perchance the signora his daughter, too, gathering the strange flowers that grow in the garden."

The old woman had now done what she could for the aspect of the chamber, and, commending the young man to the protection of the saints, took her departure.

Giovanni still found no better occupation than to look down into the garden beneath his window. From its appearance he judged it to be one of those botanic gardens which were of earlier date in Padua than elsewhere in Italy, or in the world. Or, not improbably, it might once have been the pleasure-place of an opulent family; for there was the ruin of a marble fountain in the centre, sculptured with rare art, but so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of remaining fragments. The water, however, continued to gush and sparkle into the sunbeams as cheerfully as ever. A little gurgling sound ascended to the young man's window and made him feel as if a fountain were an immortal spirit that sung its song unceasingly, and without heeding the vicissitudes around it, while one century embodied it in marble and another scattered the perishable garniture on the soil. All about the pool into which the water subsided grew various plants that seemed to require a plentiful supply of moisture for the nourishment of gigantic leaves, and in some instances flowers gorgeously magnificent. There was one shrub in particular, set in a marble vase in the midst of the pool, that bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the lustre and richness of a gem; and the whole together made a show so resplendent that it seemed enough to illuminate the garden even had there been no sunshine. Every portion of the soil was peopled with plants and herbs which, if less beautiful, still bore tokens of assiduous care, as if all had their individual virtues, known to the scientific mind that fostered them. Some were placed

in urns rich with old carving, and others in common garden-pots; some crept serpent-like along the ground, or climbed on high using whatever means of ascent was offered them. One plant had wreathed itself round a statue of Vertumnus, which was thus quite veiled and shrouded in a drapery of hanging foliage so happily arranged that it might have served a sculptor for a study.

While Giovanni stood at the window he heard a rustling behind a screen of leaves, and became aware that a person was at work in the garden. His figure soon emerged into view and showed itself to be that of no common laborer, but a tall, emaciated, sallow and sickly-looking man dressed in a scholar's garb of black. He was beyond the middle term of life, with gray hair, a thin gray beard and a face singularly marked with intellect and cultivation, but which could never, even in his more youthful days, have expressed much warmth of heart.

Nothing could exceed the intentness with which this scientific gardener examined every shrub which grew in his path; it seemed as if he was looking into their inmost nature, making observations in regard to their creative essence, and discovering why one leaf grew in this shape and another in that, and wherefore such and such flowers differed among themselves in hue and perfume. Nevertheless, in spite of the deep intelligence on his part, there was no approach to intimacy between himself and these vegetable existences. On the contrary, he avoided their actual touch or the direct inhaling of their odors with a caution that impressed Giovanni most disagreeably; for the man's demeanor was that of one walking among malignant influences, such as savage beasts or deadly snakes or evil spirits, which, should he allow them one moment of license, would wreak upon him some terrible fatality. It was strangely frightful to the young man's imagination to see this air of insecurity in a person cultivating a garden—that most simple and innocent of human toils, and which had been alike the joy and labor of the unfallen parents of the race. Was this garden, then, the Eden of the present world? and this man with such a perception of harm in what his own hands caused to grow—was he the Adam?

The distrustful gardener, while plucking away the dead leaves or pruning the too luxuriant growth of the shrubs, defended his

hands with a pair of thick gloves. Nor were these his only armor. When, in his walk through the garden, he came to the magnificent plant that hung its purple gems beside the marble fountain, he placed a kind of mask over his mouth and nostrils, as if all this beauty did but conceal a deadlier malice. But, finding his task still too dangerous, he drew back, removed the mask and called loudly, but in the infirm voice of a person affected with inward disease:

"Beatrice! Beatrice!"

"Here am I, my father! What would you?" cried a rich and youthful voice from the window of the opposite house—a voice as rich as a tropical sunset, and which made Giovanni, though he knew not why, think of deep hues of purple or crimson and of perfumes heavily delectable. "Are you in the garden?"

"Yes, Beatrice," answered the gardener, "and I need your help."

Soon there emerged from under a sculptured portal the figure of a young girl arrayed with as much richness of taste as the most splendid of the flowers, beautiful as the day and with a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much. She looked redundant with life, health and energy; all of which attributes were bound down and compressed, as it were, and girdled tensely in their luxuriance by her virgin-zone. Yet Giovanni's fancy must have grown morbid while he looked down into the garden, for the impression which the fair stranger made upon him was as if here were another flower, the human sister of those vegetable ones, as beautiful as they—more beautiful than the richest of them—but still to be touched only with a glove, nor to be approached without a mask. As Beatrice came down the garden-path it was observable that she handled and inhaled the odor of several of the plants which her father had most sedulously avoided.

"Here, Beatrice," said the latter; "see how many needful offices require to be done to our chief treasure. Yet, shattered as I am, my life might pay the penalty of approaching it so closely as circumstances demand. Henceforth, I fear, this plant must be consigned to your sole charge."

"And gladly will I undertake it," cried again the rich tones of the young lady as she bent toward the magnificent plant and opened her arms as if to embrace it.—"Yes, my sister, my splendor, it shall be Beatrice's task to nurse and serve thee, and thou shalt

reward her with thy kisses and perfume-breath, which to her is as the breath of life."

Then, with all the tenderness in her manner that was so strikingly expressed in her words, she busied herself with such attentions as the plant seemed to require; and Giovanni, at his lofty window, rubbed his eyes and almost doubted whether it were a girl tending her favorite flower or one sister performing the duties of affection to another.

The scene soon terminated. Whether Doctor Rappaccini had finished his labors in the garden or that his watchful eye had caught the stranger's face, he now took his daughter's arm and retired. Night was already closing in; oppressive exhalations seemed to proceed from the plants and steal upward past the open window, and Giovanni, closing the lattice, went to his couch and dreamed of a rich flower and beautiful girl. Flower and maiden were different, and yet the same, and fraught with some strange peril in either shape.

But there is an influence in the light of morning that tends to rectify whatever errors of fancy, or even of judgment, we may have incurred during the sun's decline, or among the shadows of the night, or in the less wholesome glow of moonshine. Giovanni's first movement on starting from sleep was to throw open the window and gaze down into the garden which his dreams had made so fertile of mysteries. He was surprised, and a little ashamed, to find how real and matter-of-fact an affair it proved to be in the first rays of the sun, which gilded the dewdrops that hung upon leaf and blossom, and, while giving a brighter beauty to each rare flower, brought everything within the limits of ordinary experience. The young man rejoiced that in the heart of the barren city he had the privilege of overlooking this spot of lovely and luxuriant vegetation. It would serve, he said to himself, as a symbolic language to keep him in communion with Nature. Neither the sickly and thought-worn Doctor Giacomo Rappaccini, it is true, nor his brilliant daughter, was now visible; so that Giovanni could not determine how much of the singularity which he attributed to both was due to their own qualities, and how much to his wonder-working fancy. But he was inclined to take a most rational view of the whole matter.

In the course of the day he paid his respects to Signor Pietro Baglioni, professor of medicine in the university, a physician of eminent repute to whom Giovanni had brought a letter of introduction. The professor was an elderly personage, apparently of genial nature and habits that might almost be called jovial; he kept the young man to dinner and made himself very agreeable by the freedom and liveliness of his conversation, especially when warmed by a flask or two of Tuscan wine. Giovanni, conceiving that men of science, inhabitants of the same city, must needs be on familiar terms with one another, took an opportunity to mention the name of Dr. Rappaccini. But the professor did not respond with so much cordiality as he had anticipated.

"Ill would it become a teacher of the divine art of medicine," said Professor Pietro Baglioni, in answer to a question of Giovanni, "to withhold due and well-considered praise of a physician so eminently skilled as Rappaccini. But, on the other hand, I should answer it but scantily to my conscience were I to permit a worthy youth like yourself, Signor Giovanni, the son of an ancient friend, to imbibe erroneous ideas respecting a man who might hereafter chance to hold your life and death in his hands. The truth is our worshipful Doctor Rappaccini has as much science as any member of the faculty—with perhaps one single exception—in Padua or all Italy, but there are certain grave objections to his professional character."

"And what are they?" asked the young man.

"Has my friend Giovanni any disease of body or heart, that he is so inquisitive about physicians?" said the professor, with a smile. "But, as for Rappaccini, it is said of him—and I, who know the man well, can answer for its truth—that he cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life—his own among the rest—or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard-seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge."

"Methinks he is an awful man indeed," remarked Guasconti, mentally recalling the cold and purely intellectual aspect of Rappaccini. "And yet, worshipful professor, is it not a noble spirit? Are there many men capable of so spiritual a love of science?"

"God forbid!" answered the professor, somewhat testily—"at least, unless they take sounder views of the healing art than those adopted by Rappaccini. It is his theory that all medicinal virtues are comprised within those substances which we term vegetable poisons. These he cultivates with his own hands, and is said even to have produced new varieties of poison more horribly deleterious than Nature, without the assistance of this learned person, would ever have plagued the world with. That the Signor Doctor does less mischief than might be expected with such dangerous substances is undeniable. Now and then, it must be owned, he has effected—or seemed to effect—a marvellous cure. But, to tell you my private mind, Signor Giovanni, he should receive little credit for such instances of success—they being probably the work of chance—but should be held strictly accountable for his failures, which may justly be considered his own work."

The youth might have taken Baglioni's opinions with many grains of allowance had he known that there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Doctor Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage. If the reader be inclined to judge for himself, we refer him to certain black-letter tracts on both sides preserved in the medical department of the University of Padua.

"I know not, most learned professor," returned Giovanni, after musing on what had been said of Rappaccini's exclusive zeal for science—"I know not how dearly this physician may love his art, but surely there is one object more dear to him. He has a daughter."

"Aha!" cried the professor, with a laugh. "So now our friend Giovanni's secret is out! You have heard of this daughter, whom all the young men in Padua are wild about, though not half a dozen have ever had the good hap to see her face. I know little of the Signora Beatrice save that Rappaccini is said to have instructed her deeply in his science, and that, young and beautiful as fame reports her, she is already qualified to fill a professor's chair. Perchance her father destines her for mine. Other absurd rumors there be, not worth talking about or listening to. So now, Signor Giovanni, drink off your glass of *Lacryma*."

Guasconti returned to his lodgings somewhat heated with the

wine he had quaffed, and which caused his brain to swim with strange fantasies in reference to Doctor Rappaccini and the beautiful Beatrice. On his way, happening to pass by a florist's, he bought a fresh bouquet of flowers.

Ascending to his chamber, he seated himself near the window, but within the shadow thrown by the depth of the wall, so that he could look down into the garden with little risk of being discovered. All beneath his eye was a solitude. The strange plants were basking in the sunshine, and now and then nodding gently to one another, as if in acknowledgment of sympathy and kindred. In the midst, by the shattered fountain, grew the magnificent shrub, with its purple gems clustering all over it; they glowed in the air and gleamed back again out of the depths of the pool, which thus seemed to overflow with colored radiance from the rich reflection that was steeped in it. At first, as we have said, the garden was a solitude. Soon, however, as Giovanni had half hoped, half feared, would be the case, a figure appeared beneath the antique sculptured portal and came down between the rows of plants, inhaling their various perfumes as if she were one of those beings of old classic fable that lived upon sweet odors. On again beholding Beatrice the young man was even startled to perceive how much her beauty exceeded his recollection of it—so brilliant, so vivid in its character, that she glowed amid the sunlight, and, as Giovanni whispered to himself, positively illuminated the more shadowy intervals of the garden path. Her face being now more revealed than on the former occasion, he was struck by its expression of simplicity and sweetness—qualities that had not entered into his idea of her character, and which made him ask anew what manner of mortal she might be. Nor did he fail again to observe or imagine an analogy between the beautiful girl and the gorgeous shrub that hung its gemlike flowers over the fountain—a resemblance which Beatrice seemed to have indulged a fantastic humor in heightening both by the arrangement of her dress and the selection of its hues.

Approaching the shrub, she threw open her arms as with a passionate ardor, and drew its branches into an intimate embrace—so intimate that her features were hidden in its leafy bosom and her glistening ringlets all intermingled with the flowers.

"Give me thy breath, my sister," exclaimed Beatrice, "for I am faint with common air. And give me this flower of thine, which I separate with gentlest fingers from the stem and place it close beside my heart."

With these words the beautiful daughter of Rappaccini plucked one of the richest blossoms of the shrub, and was about to fasten it in her bosom. But now, unless Giovanni's draughts of wine had bewildered his senses, a singular incident occurred. A small orange-colored reptile of the lizard or chameleon species chanced to be creeping along the path just at the feet of Beatrice. It appeared to Giovanni, but at the distance from which he gazed he could scarcely have seen anything so minute—it appeared to him, however, that a drop or two of moisture from the broken stem of the flower descended upon the lizard's head. For an instant the reptile contorted itself violently, and then lay motionless in the sunshine. Beatrice observed this remarkable phenomenon and crossed herself sadly, but without surprise; nor did she therefore hesitate to arrange the fatal flower in her bosom. There it blushed, and almost glimmered with the dazzling effect of a precious stone, adding to her dress and aspect the one appropriate charm which nothing else in the world could have supplied. But Giovanni, out of the shadow of his window, bent forward and shrank back, and murmured and trembled.

"Am I awake? Have I my senses?" said he to himself. "What is this being? Beautiful shall I call her, or inexpressibly terrible?"

Beatrice now strayed carelessly through the garden, approaching closer beneath Giovanni's window; so that he was compelled to thrust his head quite out of its concealment in order to gratify the intense and painful curiosity which she excited. At this moment there came a beautiful insect over the garden wall; it had perhaps wandered through the city and found no flowers nor verdure among those antique haunts of men until the heavy perfumes of Doctor Rappaccini's shrubs had lured it from afar. Without alighting on the flowers this winged brightness seemed to be attracted by Beatrice, and lingered in the air and fluttered about her head. Now, here it could not be but that Giovanni Guasconti's eyes deceived him. Be that as it might, he fancied that while Beatrice was gazing at the insect with childish delight it grew



faint and fell at her feet. Its bright wings shivered; it was dead—from no cause that he could discern, unless it were the atmosphere of her breath. Again Beatrice crossed herself and sighed heavily as she bent over the dead insect.

An impulsive movement of Giovanni drew her eyes to the window. There she beheld the beautiful head of the young man—rather a Grecian than an Italian head, with fair, regular features and a glistening of gold among his ringlets—gazing down upon her like a being that hovered in mid-air. Scarcely knowing what he did, Giovanni threw down the bouquet which he had hitherto held in his hand.

"Signora," said he, "there are pure and healthful flowers: wear them for the sake of Giovanni Guasconti."

"Thanks, signor!" replied Beatrice, with her rich voice that came forth as it were like a gush of music, and with a mirthful expression half childish and half woman-like. "I accept your gift, and would fain recompense it with this precious purple flower; but if I toss it into the air, it will not reach you. So Signor Gausconti must even content himself with my thanks."

She lifted the bouquet from the ground, and then, as if inwardly ashamed at having stepped aside from her maidenly reserve to respond to a stranger's greeting, passed swiftly homeward through the garden. But, few as the moments were, it seemed to Giovanni, when she was on the point of vanishing beneath the sculptured portal, that his beautiful bouquet was already beginning to wither in her grasp. It was an idle thought: there could be no possibility of distinguishing a faded flower from a fresh one at so great a distance.

For many days after this incident the young man avoided the window that looked into Doctor Rappaccini's garden as if something ugly and monstrous would have blasted his eyesight had he been betrayed into a glance. He felt conscious of having put himself, to a certain extent, within the influence of an unintelligible power by the communication which he had opened with Beatrice. The wisest course would have been, if his heart were in any real danger, to quit his lodgings, and Padua itself, at once; the next wiser, to have accustomed himself as far as possible to the familiar and daylight view of Beatrice, thus bringing her

rigidly and systematically within the limits of ordinary experience. Least of all, while avoiding her sight, should Giovanni have remained so near this extraordinary being that the proximity, and possibility even of intercourse, should give a kind of substance and reality to the wild vagaries which his imagination ran riot continually in producing. Guasconti had not a deep heart—or, at all events, its depths were not sounded now—but he had a quick fancy and an ardent southern temperament which rose every instant to a higher fever-pitch. Whether or not Beatrice possessed those terrible attributes—that fatal breath, the affinity with those so beautiful and deadly flowers—which were indicated by what Giovanni had witnessed, she had at least instilled a fierce and subtle poison into his system. It was not love, although her rich beauty was a madness to him, nor horror, even while he fancied her spirit to be imbued with the same baneful essence that seemed to pervade her physical frame, but a wild offspring of both love and horror that had each parent in it and burned like one and shivered like the other. Giovanni knew not what to dread; still less did he know what to hope; yet hope and dread kept a continual warfare in his breast, alternately vanquishing one another and starting up afresh to renew the contest. Blessed are all simple emotions, be they dark or bright! It is the lurid intermixture of the two that produces the illuminating blaze of the infernal regions.

Sometimes he endeavored to assuage the fever of his spirit by a rapid walk through the streets of Padua or beyond its gates; his footsteps kept time with the throbbings of his brain, so that the walk was apt to accelerate itself to a race. One day he found himself arrested; his arm was seized by a portly personage who had turned back on recognizing the young man and expended much breath in overtaking him.

“Signor Giovanni! Stay, my young friend!” cried he. “Have you forgotten me? That might well be the case if I were as much altered as yourself.”

It was Baglioni, whom Giovanni had avoided ever since their first meeting from a doubt that the professor’s sagacity would look too deeply into his secrets. Endeavoring to recover himself, he stared forth wildly from his inner world into the outer one, and spoke like a man in a dream:

"Yes; I am Giovanni Guasconti. You are Professor Pietro Baglioni. Now let me pass."

"Not yet—not yet, Signor Giovanni Guasconti," said the professor, smiling, but at the same time scrutinizing the youth with an earnest glance. "What! Did I grow up side by side with your father, and shall his son pass me like a stranger in these old streets of Padua? Stand still, Signor Giovanni, for we must have a word or two before we part."

"Speedily, then, most worshipful professor—speedily!" said Giovanni, with feverish impatience. "Does not Your Worship see that I am in haste?"

Now, while he was speaking, there came a man in black along the street, stooping and moving feebly like a person in inferior health. His face was all overspread with a most sickly and sallow hue, but yet so pervaded with an expression of piercing and active intellect that an observer might easily have overlooked the merely physical attributes, and have seen only this wonderful energy. As he passed, this person exchanged a cold and distant salutation with Baglioni, but fixed his eyes upon Giovanni with an intentness that seemed to bring out whatever was within him worthy of notice. Nevertheless, there was a peculiar quietness in the look, as if taking merely a speculative, not a human, interest in the young man.

"It is Doctor Rappaccini," whispered the professor, when the stranger had passed. "Has he ever seen your face before?"

"Not that I know," answered Giovanni, starting at the name.

"He has seen you! he must have seen you!" said Baglioni, hastily. "For some purpose or other, this man of science is making a study of you. I know that look of his: it is the same that coldly illuminates his face as he bends over a bird, a mouse or a butterfly which in pursuance of some experiment he has killed by the perfume of a flower—a look as deep as Nature itself, but without Nature's warmth of love. Signor Giovanni, I will stake my life upon it you are the subject of one of Rappaccini's experiments."

"Will you make a fool of me?" cried Giovanni, passionately. "That, Signor Professor, were an untoward experiment."

"Patience, patience!" replied the imperturbable professor. "I tell thee, my poor Giovanni, that Rappaccini has a scientific in-

terest in thee. Thou hast fallen into fearful hands. And the Signora Beatrice—what part does she act in this mystery?"

But Guasconti, finding Baglioni's pertinacity intolerable, here broke away, and was gone before the professor could again seize his arm. He looked after the young man intently, and shook his head.

"This must not be," said Baglioni to himself. "The youth is the son of my old friend, and shall not come to any harm from which the arcana of medical science can preserve him. Besides, it is too insufferable an impertinence in Rappaccini thus to snatch the lad out of my own hands, as I may say, and make use of him for his infernal experiments. This daughter of his! It shall be looked to.—Perchance, most learned Rappaccini, I may foil you where you little dream of it!"

Meanwhile, Giovanni had pursued a circuitous route, and at length found himself at the door of his lodgings. As he crossed the threshold he was met by old Lisabetta, who smirked and smiled and was evidently desirous to attract his attention—vainly, however, as the ebullition of his feelings had momentarily subsided into a cold and dull vacuity. He turned his eyes full upon the withered face that was puckering itself into a smile, but seemed to behold it not. The old dame, therefore, laid her grasp upon his cloak.

"Signor, signor!" whispered she, still with a smile over the whole breadth of her visage, so that it looked not unlike a grotesque carving in wood, darkened by centuries. "Listen, signor! There is a private entrance into the garden."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Giovanni, turning quickly about, as if an inanimate thing should start into feverish life. "A private entrance into Doctor Rappaccini's garden?"

"Hush, hush! Not so loud!" whispered Lisabetta, putting her hand over his mouth. "Yes, into the worshipful doctor's garden, where you may see all his fine shrubbery. Many a young man in Padua would give gold to be admitted among those flowers."

Giovanni put a piece of gold into her hand.

"Show me the way," said he.

A surmise, probably excited by his conversation with Baglioni, crossed his mind that this interposition of old Lisabetta might

perchance be connected with the intrigue, whatever were its nature, in which the professor seemed to suppose that Doctor Rappaccini was involving him. But such a suspicion, though it disturbed Giovanni, was inadequate to restrain him. The instant he was aware of the possibility of approaching Beatrice, it seemed an absolute necessity of his existence to do so. It mattered not whether she were angel or demon: he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward in ever lessening circles toward a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow. And yet, strange to say, there came across him a sudden doubt whether this intense interest on his part were not delusory, whether it were really of so deep and positive a nature as to justify him in now thrusting himself into an incalculable position, whether it were not merely the fantasy of a young man's brain only slightly or not at all connected with his heart.

He paused, hesitated, turned half about, but again went on. His withered guide led him along several obscure passages, and finally undid a door through which, as it was opened, there came the sight and sound of rustling leaves with the broken sunshine glimmering among them. Giovanni stepped forth, and, forcing himself through the entanglement of a shrub that wreathed its tendrils over the hidden entrance, he stood beneath his own window, in the open area of Doctor Rappaccini's garden.

How often is it the case that when impossibilities have come to pass, and dreams have condensed their misty substance into tangible realities, we find ourselves calm, and even coldly self-possessed, amid circumstances which it would have been a delirium of joy or agony to anticipate! Fate delights to thwart us thus. Passion will choose his own time to rush upon the scene, and lingers sluggishly behind when an appropriate adjustment of events would seem to summon his appearance. So was it now with Giovanni. Day after day his pulses had throbbed with feverish blood at the improbable idea of an interview with Beatrice, and of standing with her face to face in this very garden, basking in the Oriental sunshine of her beauty and snatching from her full gaze the mystery which he deemed the riddle of his own existence. But now there was a singular and untimely equanimity within his breast. He threw a glance around the garden to discover

if Beatrice or her father were present, and, perceiving that he was alone, began a critical observation of the plants.

The aspect of one and all of them dissatisfied him: their gorgeousness seemed fierce, passionate, and even unnatural. There was hardly an individual shrub which a wanderer straying by himself through a forest would not have been startled to find growing wild, as if an unearthly face had glared at him out of the thicket. Several, also, would have shocked a delicate instinct by an appearance of artificialness, indicating that there had been such commixture, and, as it were, adultery, of various vegetable species that the production was no longer of God's making, but the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy, glowing with only an evil mockery of beauty. They were probably the result of experiment, which in one or two cases had succeeded in mingling plants individually lovely into a compound possessing the questionable and ominous character that distinguished the whole growth of the garden. In fine, Giovanni recognized but two or three plants in the collection, and those of a kind that he well knew to be poisonous. While busy with these contemplations he heard the rustling of a silken garment, and, turning, beheld Beatrice emerging from beneath the sculptured portal.

Giovanni had not considered with himself what should be his deportment—whether he should apologize for his intrusion into the garden or assume that he was there with the privacy at least, if not by the desire, of Doctor Rappaccini or his daughter. But Beatrice's manner placed him at his ease, though leaving him still in doubt by what agency he had gained admittance. She came lightly along the path, and met him near the broken fountain. There was surprise in her face, but brightened by a simple and kind expression of pleasure.

"You are a connoisseur in flowers, signor," said Beatrice, with a smile, alluding to the bouquet which he had flung her from the window; "it is no marvel, therefore, if the sight of my father's rare collection has tempted you to take a nearer view. If he were here, he could tell you many strange and interesting facts as to the nature and habits of these shrubs, for he has spent a lifetime in such studies, and this garden is his world."

"And yourself, lady?" observed Giovanni. "If fame says true,

you likewise are deeply skilled in the virtues indicated by these rich blossoms and these spicy perfumes. Would you deign to be my instructress, I should prove an apter scholar than under Signor Rappaccini himself."

"Are there such idle rumors?" asked Beatrice, with the music of a pleasant laugh. "Do people say that I am skilled in my father's science of plants? What a jest is there! No; though I have grown up among these flowers, I know no more of them than their hues and perfume, and sometimes methinks I would fain rid myself of even that small knowledge. There are many flowers here—and those not the least brilliant—that shock and offend me when they meet my eye. But pray, signor, do not believe these stories about my science; believe nothing of me save what you see with your own eyes."

"And must I believe all that I have seen with my own eyes?" asked Giovanni, pointedly, while the recollection of former scenes made him shrink. "No, signora; you demand too little of me. Bid me believe nothing save what comes from your own lips."

It would appear that Beatrice understood him. There came a deep flush to her cheek, but she looked full into Giovanni's eyes and responded to his gaze of uneasy suspicion with a queenlike haughtiness.

"I do so bid you, signor," she replied. "Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me; if true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence. But the words of Beatrice Rappaccini's lips are true from the heart outward; those you may believe."

A fervor glowed in her whole aspect and beamed upon Giovanni's consciousness like the light of truth itself. But while she spoke there was a fragrance in the atmosphere around her rich and delightful, though evanescent, yet which the young man, from an indefinable reluctance, scarcely dared to draw into his lungs. It might be the odor of the flowers. Could it be Beatrice's breath which thus embalmed her words with a strange richness, as if by steeping them in her heart? A faintness passed like a shadow over Giovanni, and flitted away; he seemed to gaze through the beautiful girl's eyes into her transparent soul, and felt no more doubt or fear.

The tinge of passion that had colored Beatrice's manner van-

ished; she became gay and appeared to derive a pure delight from her communion with the youth, not unlike what the maiden of a lonely island might have felt conversing with a voyager from the civilized world. Evidently her experience of life had been confined within the limits of that garden. She talked now about matters as simple as the daylight or summer clouds, and now asked questions in reference to the city or Giovanni's distant home, his friends, his mother and his sisters—questions indicating such seclusion and such lack of familiarity with modes and forms that Giovanni responded as if to an infant. Her spirit gushed out before him like a fresh rill that was just catching its first glimpse of the sunlight and wondering at the reflections of earth and sky which were flung into its bosom. There came thoughts, too, from a deep source, and fantasies of a gemlike brilliancy, as if diamonds and rubies sparkled upward among the bubbles of the fountain. Ever and anon there gleamed across the young man's mind a sense of wonder that he should be walking side by side with the being who had so wrought upon his imagination, whom he had idealized in such hues of terror, in whom he had positively witnessed such manifestations of dreadful attributes—that he should be conversing with Beatrice like a brother, and should find her so human and so maiden-like. But such reflections were only momentary; the effect of her character was too real not to make itself familiar at once.

In this free intercourse they had strayed through the garden, and now, after many turns among its avenues, were come to the shattered fountain beside which grew the magnificent shrub with its treasury of glowing blossoms. A fragrance was diffused from it which Giovanni recognized as identical with that which he had attributed to Beatrice's breath, but incomparably more powerful. As her eyes fell upon it Giovanni beheld her press her hand to her bosom, as if her heart were throbbing suddenly and painfully.

"For the first time in my life," murmured she, addressing the shrub, "I had forgotten thee."

"I remember, signora," said Giovanni, "that you once promised to reward me with one of these living gems for the bouquet which I had the happy boldness to fling to your feet. Permit me now to pluck it as a memorial of this interview."

He made a step toward the shrub with extended hand. But



Beatrice darted forward, uttering a shriek that went through his heart like a dagger. She caught his hand and drew it back with the whole force of her slender figure. Giovanni felt her touch thrilling through his fibres.

"Touch it not," exclaimed she, in a voice of agony—"not for thy life! It is fatal."

Then, hiding her face, she fled from him and vanished beneath the sculptured portal. As Giovanni followed her with his eyes he beheld the emaciated figure and pale intelligence of Doctor Rappaccini, who had been watching the scene, he knew not how long, within the shadow of the entrance.

No sooner was Guasconti alone in his chamber than the image of Beatrice came back to his passionate musings invested with all the witchery that had been gathering around it ever since his first glimpse of her, and now likewise imbued with a tender warmth of girlish womanhood. She was human; her nature was endowed with all gentle and feminine qualities; she was worthiest to be worshipped; she was capable, surely, on her part, of the height and heroism of love. Those tokens which he had hitherto considered as proofs of a frightful peculiarity in her physical and moral system were now either forgotten or by the subtle sophistry of passion transmuted into a golden crown of enchantment, rendering Beatrice the more admirable by so much as she was the more unique. Whatever had looked ugly was now beautiful; or if incapable of such a change, it stole away and hid itself among those shapeless half-ideas which throng the dim region beyond the daylight of our perfect consciousness.

Thus did Giovanni spend the night, nor fell asleep until the dawn had begun to awake the slumbering flowers in Doctor Rappaccini's garden, whither his dreams doubtless led him. Up rose the sun in his due season, and, flinging his beams upon the young man's eyelids, awoke him to a sense of pain. When thoroughly aroused, he became sensible of a burning and tingling agony in his hand, in his right hand—the very hand which Beatrice had grasped in her own when he was on the point of plucking one of the gemlike flowers. On the back of that hand there was now a purple print like that of four small fingers, and the likeness of a slender thumb upon his wrist. Oh how stubbornly does love, or

even that cunning semblance of love which flourishes in the imagination, but strikes no depth of root into the heart—how stubbornly does it hold its faith until the moment come when it is doomed to vanish into thin mist! Giovanni wrapped a handkerchief about his hand and wondered what evil thing had stung him, and soon forgot his pain in a reverie of Beatrice.

After the first interview, a second was in the inevitable course of what we call fate. A third, a fourth, and a meeting with Beatrice in the garden was no longer an incident in Giovanni's daily life, but the whole space in which he might be said to live, for the anticipation and memory of that ecstatic hour made up the remainder. Nor was it otherwise with the daughter of Rappaccini. She watched for the youth's appearance, and flew to his side with confidence as unreserved as if they had been playmates from early infancy—as if they were such playmates still. If by any unwonted chance he failed to come at the appointed moment, she stood beneath the window and sent up the rich sweetness of her tones to float around him in his chamber and echo and reverberate throughout his heart, "Giovanni, Giovanni! Why tarriest thou? Come down!" and down he hastened into that Eden of poisonous flowers.

But with all this intimate familiarity there was still a reserve in Beatrice's demeanor so rigidly and invariably sustained that the idea of infringing it scarcely occurred to his imagination. By all appreciable signs they loved—they had looked love with eyes that conveyed the holy secret from the depths of one soul into the depths of the other, as if it were too sacred to be whispered by the way; they had even spoken love in those gushes of passion when their spirits darted forth in articulated breath like tongues of long-hidden flame—and yet there had been no seal of lips, no clasp of hands, nor any slightest caress such as love claims and hallows. He had never touched one of the gleaming ringlets of her hair; her garment—so marked was the physical barrier between them—had never been waved against him by a breeze. On the few occasions when Giovanni had seemed tempted to overstep the limit, Beatrice grew so sad, so stern, and, withal, wore such a look of desolate separation shuddering at itself, that not a spoken word was requisite to repel him. At such times he was startled at the

horrible suspicions that rose monster-like out of the caverns of his heart and stared him in the face. His love grew thin and faint as the morning mist; his doubts alone had substance. But when Beatrice's face brightened again after the momentary shadow, she was transformed at once from the mysterious, questionable being whom he had watched with so much awe and horror: she was now the beautiful and unsophisticated girl whom he felt that his spirit knew with a certainty beyond all other knowledge.

A considerable time had now passed since Giovanni's last meeting with Baglioni. One morning, however, he was disagreeably surprised by a visit from the professor, whom he had scarcely thought of for whole weeks, and would willingly have forgotten still longer. Given up, as he had long been, to a pervading excitement, he could tolerate no companions except upon condition of their perfect sympathy with his present state of feeling; such sympathy was not to be expected from Professor Baglioni.

The visitor chatted carelessly for a few moments about the gossip of the city and the university, and then took up another topic.

"I have been reading an old classic author lately," said he, "and met with a story that strangely interested me. Possibly you may remember it. It is of an Indian prince who sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great. She was as lovely as the dawn and gorgeous as the sunset, but what especially distinguished her was a certain rich perfume in her breath richer than a garden of Persian roses. Alexander, as was natural to a youthful conqueror, fell in love at first sight with this magnificent stranger. But a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her."

"And what was that?" asked Giovanni, turning his eyes downward to avoid those of the professor.

"That this lovely woman," continued Baglioni, with emphasis, "had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. Poison was her element of life. With that rich perfume of her breath she blasted the very air. Her love would have been poison—her embrace, death. Is not this a marvellous tale?"

"A childish fable," answered Giovanni, nervously starting from his chair. "I marvel how Your Worship finds time to read such nonsense among your graver studies."

"By the bye," said the professor, looking uneasily about him, "what singular fragrance is this in your apartment? Is it the perfume of your gloves? It is faint, but delicious, and yet, after all, by no means agreeable. Were I to breathe it long, methinks it would make me ill. It is like the breath of a flower, but I see no flowers in the chamber."

"Nor are there any," replied Giovanni, who had turned pale as the professor spoke; "nor, I think, is there any fragrance except in Your Worship's imagination. Odors, being a sort of element combined of the sensual and the spiritual, are apt to deceive us in this manner. The recollection of a perfume—the bare idea of it—may easily be mistaken for a present reality."

"Ay, but my sober imagination does not often play such tricks," said Baglioni; "and were I to fancy any kind of odor, it would be that of some vile apothecary-drug wherewith my fingers are likely enough to be imbued. Our worshipful friend Rappaccini, as I have heard, tinctures his medicaments with odors richer than those of Araby. Doubtless, likewise, the fair and learned Signora Beatrice would minister to her patients with draughts as sweet as a maiden's breath, but woe to him that sips them!"

Giovanni's face evinced many contending emotions. The tone in which the professor alluded to the pure and lovely daughter of Rappaccini was a torture to his soul, and yet the intimation of a view of her character opposite to his own gave instantaneous distinctness to a thousand dim suspicions which now grinned at him like so many demons. But he strove hard to quell them, and to respond to Baglioni with a true lover's perfect faith.

"Signor Professor," said he, "you were my father's friend; perchance, too, it is your purpose to act a friendly part toward his son. I would fain feel nothing toward you save respect and deference, but I pray you to observe, signor, that there is one subject on which we must not speak. You know not the Signora Beatrice; you cannot, therefore, estimate the wrong—the blasphemy, I may even say—that is offered to her character by a light or injurious word."

"Giovanni! my poor Giovanni!" answered the professor, with a calm expression of pity. "I know this wretched girl far better than yourself. You shall hear the truth in respect to the poisoner Rappaccini and his poisonous daughter—yes, poisonous as she is beautiful. Listen, for even should you do violence to my gray hairs it shall not silence me. That old fable of the Indian woman has become a truth by the deep and deadly science of Rappaccini and in the person of the lovely Beatrice."

Giovanni groaned and hid his face.

"Her father," continued Baglioni, "was not restrained by natural affection from offering up his child in this horrible manner as the victim of his insane zeal for science. For—let us do him justice—he is as true a man of science as ever distilled his own heart in an alembic. What, then, will be your fate? Beyond a doubt, you are selected as the material of some new experiment. Perhaps the result is to be death—perhaps a fate more awful still. Rappaccini, with what he calls the interest of science before his eyes, will hesitate at nothing."

"It is a dream!" muttered Giovanni to himself. "Surely it is a dream!"

"But," resumed the professor, "be of good cheer, son of my friend! It is not yet too late for the rescue. Possibly we may even succeed in bringing back this miserable child within the limits of ordinary nature from which her father's madness has estranged her. Behold this little silver vase; it was wrought by the hands of the renowned Benvenuto Cellini, and is well worthy to be a love-gift to the fairest dame in Italy. But its contents are invaluable. One little sip of this antidote would have rendered the most virulent poisons of the Borgias innocuous; doubt not that it will be as efficacious against those of Rappaccini. Bestow the vase and the precious liquid within it on your Beatrice, and hopefully await the result."

Baglioni laid a small exquisitely-wrought silver phial on the table and withdrew, leaving what he had said to produce its effect upon the young man's mind.

"We will thwart Rappaccini yet," thought he, chuckling to himself, as he descended the stairs. "But let us confess the truth of him: he is a wonderful man—a wonderful man indeed—a vile

empiric, however, in his practice, and therefore not to be tolerated by those who respect the good old rules of the medical profession."

Throughout Giovanni's whole acquaintance with Beatrice he had occasionally, as we have said, been haunted by dark surmises as to her character; yet so thoroughly had she made herself felt by him as a simple, natural, most affectionate and guileless creature that the image now held up by Professor Baglioni looked as strange and incredible as if it were not in accordance with his own original conception. True, there were ugly recollections connected with his first glimpses of the beautiful girl: he could not quite forget the bouquet that withered in her grasp, and the insect that perished amid the sunny air by no ostensible agency save the fragrance of her breath. These incidents, however, dissolving in the pure light of her character, had no longer the efficacy of facts, but were acknowledged as mistaken fantasies, by whatever testimony of the senses they might appear to be substantiated. There is something truer and more real than what we can see with the eyes and touch with the finger. On such better evidence had Giovanni founded his confidence in Beatrice, though rather by the necessary force of her high attributes than by any deep and generous faith on his part. But now his spirit was incapable of sustaining itself at the height to which the early enthusiasm of passion had exalted it; he fell down grovelling among earthly doubts, and defiled therewith the pure whiteness of Beatrice's image. Not that he gave her up: he did but distrust. He resolved to institute some decisive test that should satisfy him once for all whether there were those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul. His eyes, gazing down afar, might have deceived him as to the lizard, the insect and the flowers; but if he could witness at the distance of a few paces the sudden blight of one fresh and healthful flower in Beatrice's hand, there would be room for no further question. With this idea he hastened to the florist's, and purchased a bouquet that was still gemmed with the morning dewdrops.

It was now the customary hour of his daily interview with Beatrice. Before descending into the garden Giovanni failed not to look at his figure in the mirror—a vanity to be expected in a beauti-

ful young man, yet, as displaying itself at that troubled and feverish moment, the token of a certain shallowness of feeling and insincerity of character. He did gaze, however, and said to himself that his features had never before possessed so rich a grace, nor his eyes such vivacity, nor his cheeks so warm a hue of superabundant life.

"At least," thought he, "her poison has not yet insinuated itself into my system. I am no flower, to perish in her grasp."

With that thought he turned his eyes on the bouquet, which he had never once laid aside from his hand. A thrill of indefinable horror shot through his frame on perceiving that those dewy flowers were already beginning to droop; they wore the aspect of things that had been fresh and lovely yesterday. Giovanni grew white as marble and stood motionless before the mirror, staring at his own reflection there as at the likeness of something frightful. He remembered Baglioni's remark about the fragrance that seemed to pervade the chamber: it must have been the poison in his breath. Then he shuddered—shuddered at himself. Recovering from his stupor, he began to watch with curious eye a spider that was busily at work hanging its web from the antique cornice of the apartment, crossing and recrossing the artful system of interwoven lines, as vigorous and active a spider as ever dangled from an old ceiling. Giovanni bent toward the insect and emitted a deep, long breath. The spider suddenly ceased its toil; the web vibrated with a tremor originating in the body of the small artisan. Again Giovanni sent forth a breath, deeper, longer and imbued with a venomous feeling out of his heart; he knew not whether he were wicked or only desperate. The spider made a convulsive grip with his limbs, and hung dead across the window.

"Accursed! accursed!" muttered Giovanni, addressing himself. "Hast thou grown so poisonous that this deadly insect perishes by thy breath?"

At that moment a rich, sweet voice came floating up from the garden:

"Giovanni, Giovanni! It is past the hour. Why tarriest thou? Come down!"

"Yes," muttered Giovanni, again; "she is the only being whom my breath may not slay. Would that it might!"

He rushed down, and in an instant was standing before the bright and loving eyes of Beatrice. A moment ago his wrath and despair had been so fierce that he could have desired nothing so much as to wither her by a glance, but with her actual presence there came influences which had too real an existence to be at once shaken off—recollections of the delicate and benign power of her feminine nature, which had so often enveloped him in a religious calm; recollections of many a holy and passionate outgush of her heart, when the pure fountain had been unsealed from its depths and made visible in its transparency to his mental eye; recollections which, had Giovanni known how to estimate them, would have assured him that all this ugly mystery was but an earthly illusion, and that, whatever mist of evil might seem to have gathered over her, the real Beatrice was a heavenly angel. Incapable as he was of such high faith, still her presence had not utterly lost its magic. Giovanni's rage was quelled into an aspect of sullen insensibility. Beatrice, with a quick spiritual sense, immediately felt that there was a gulf of blackness between them which neither he nor she could pass. They walked on together, sad and silent, and came thus to the marble fountain, and to its pool of water on the ground, in the midst of which grew the shrub that bore gemlike blossoms. Giovanni was affrighted at the eager enjoyment—the appetite, as it were—with which he found himself inhaling the fragrance of the flowers.

"Beatrice," asked he, abruptly, "whence came this shrub?"

"My father created it," answered she, with simplicity.

"Created it! created it!" repeated Giovanni. "What mean you, Beatrice?"

"He is a man fearfully acquainted with the secrets of nature," replied Beatrice, "and at the hour when I first drew breath this plant sprang from the soil, the offspring of his science, of his intellect, while I was but his earthly child. Approach it not," continued she, observing with terror that Giovanni was drawing nearer to the shrub; "it has qualities that you little dream of. But I, dearest Giovanni—I grew up and blossomed with the plant and was nourished with its breath. It was my sister, and I loved it with a human affection; for—alas! hast thou not suspected it?—there was an awful doom."



Here Giovanni frowned so darkly upon her that Beatrice paused and trembled. But her faith in his tenderness reassured her and made her blush that she had doubted for an instant.

"There was an awful doom," she continued—"the effect of my father's fatal love of science—which estranged me from all society of my kind. Until Heaven sent thee, dearest Giovanni, oh how lonely was thy poor Beatrice!"

"Was it a hard doom?" asked Giovanni, fixing his eyes upon her.

"Only of late have I known how hard it was," answered she, tenderly. "Oh yes; but my heart was torpid, and therefore quiet."

Giovanni's rage broke forth from his sullen gloom like a lightning-flash out of a dark cloud.

"Accursed one!" cried he, with venomous scorn and anger. "And, finding thy solitude wearisome, thou hast severed me likewise from all the warmth of life and enticed me into thy region of unspeakable horror!"

"Giovanni!" exclaimed Beatrice, turning her large bright eyes upon his face. The force of his words had not found its way into her mind; she was merely thunder-struck.

"Yes, poisonous thing!" repeated Giovanni, beside himself with passion. "Thou hast done it! Thou hast blasted me! Thou hast filled my veins with poison! Thou hast made me as hateful, as ugly, as loathsome and deadly a creature, as thyself—a world's wonder of hideous monstrosity! Now—if our breath be, happily, as fatal to ourselves as to all others—let us join our lips in one kiss of unutterable hatred, and so die."

"What has befallen me?" murmured Beatrice, with a low moan out of her heart. "Holy Virgin, pity me—a poor heartbroken child!"

"Thou? Dost thou pray?" cried Giovanni, still with the same fiendish scorn, "Thy very prayers as they come from thy lips taint the atmosphere with death. Yes, yes, let us pray! Let us to church and dip our fingers in the holy water at the portal: they that come after us will perish as by a pestilence. Let us sign crosses in the air: it will be scattering curses abroad in the likeness of holy symbols."

"Giovanni," said Beatrice, calmly, for her grief was beyond passion, "why dost thou join thyself with me thus in those terrible

words? I, it is true, am the horrible thing thou namest me, but thou—what hast thou to do save with one other shudder at my hideous misery to go forth out of the garden and mingle with thy race, and forget that there ever crawled on earth such a monster as poor Beatrice?”

“Dost thou pretend ignorance?” asked Giovanni, scowling upon her. “Behold! This power have I gained from the pure daughter of Rappaccini!”

There was a swarm of summer insects flitting through the air in search of the food promised by the flower-odors of the fatal garden. They circled round Giovanni’s head, and were evidently attracted toward him by the same influence which had drawn them for an instant within the sphere of several of the shrubs. He sent forth a breath among them, and smiled bitterly at Beatrice as at least a score of the insects fell dead upon the ground.

“I see it! I see it!” shrieked Beatrice. “It is my father’s fatal science! No, no, Giovanni, it was not I! Never, never! I dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so to let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart. For, Giovanni—believe it—though my body be nourished with poison, my spirit is God’s creature and craves love as its daily food. But my father! he has united us in this fearful sympathy. Yes, spurn me! tread upon me! kill me! Oh, what is death, after such words as thine? But it was not I; not for a world of bliss would I have done it!”

Giovanni’s passion had exhausted itself in its outburst from his lips. There now came across him a sense—mournful and not without tenderness—of the intimate and peculiar relationship between Beatrice and himself. They stood, as it were, in an utter solitude which would be made none the less solitary by the densest throng of human life. Ought not, then, the desert of humanity around them to press this insulated pair closer together? If they should be cruel to one another, who was there to be kind to them? Besides, thought Giovanni, might there not still be a hope of his returning, within the limits of ordinary nature, and leading Beatrice—the redeemed Beatrice—by the hand? Oh, weak and selfish and unworthy spirit, that could dream of an earthly union and earthly happiness as possible after such deep love had

been so bitterly wronged as was Beatrice's love by Giovanni's blighting words! No, no! there could be no such hope. She must pass heavily with that broken heart across the borders; she must bathe her hurts in some font of Paradise and forget her grief in the light of immortality, and there be well.

But Giovanni did not know it.

"Dear Beatrice," said he, approaching her, while she shrank away, as always at his approach, but now with a different impulse—"dearest Beatrice, our fate is not yet so desperate. Behold! There is a medicine, potent, as a wise physician has assured me, and almost divine in its efficacy. It is composed of ingredients the most opposite to those by which thy awful father has brought this calamity upon thee and me. It is distilled of blessed herbs. Shall we not quaff it together, and thus be purified from evil?"

"Give it me," said Beatrice, extending her hand to receive the little silver phial which Giovanni took from his bosom. She added with a peculiar emphasis, "I will drink, but do thou await the result."

She put Baglioni's antidote to her lips, and at the same moment the figure of Rappaccini emerged from the portal and came slowly toward the marble fountain. As he drew near the pale man of science seemed to gaze with a triumphant expression at the beautiful youth and maiden, as might an artist who should spend his life in achieving a picture or a group of statuary, and finally be satisfied with his success. He paused; his bent form grew erect with conscious power; he spread out his hand over them in the attitude of a father imploring a blessing upon his children. But those were the same hands that had thrown poison into the stream of their lives! Giovanni trembled. Beatrice shuddered very nervously and pressed her hand upon her heart.

"My daughter," said Rappaccini, "thou art no longer lonely in the world. Pluck one of those precious gems from thy sister-shrub, and bid thy bridegroom wear it in his bosom. It will not harm him now. My science and the sympathy between thee and him have so wrought within his system that he now stands apart from common men, as thou dost, daughter of my pride and triumph, from ordinary women. Pass on, then, through the world most dear to one another and dreadful to all besides."

"My father," said Beatrice, feebly—and still, as she spoke, she kept her hand upon her heart—"wherefore didst thou inflict this miserable doom upon thy child?"

"'Miserable!'" exclaimed Rappaccini. "What mean you, foolish girl? Dost thou deem it misery to be endowed with marvellous gifts against which no power nor strength could avail an enemy, misery to be able to quell the mightiest with a breath, misery to be as terrible as thou art beautiful? Wouldst thou, then, have preferred the condition of a weak woman, exposed to all evil and capable of none?"

"I would fain have been loved, not feared," murmured Beatrice, sinking down upon the ground. "But now it matters not; I am going, father, where the evil which thou hast striven to mingle with my being will pass away like a dream—like the fragrance of these poisonous flowers, which will no longer taint my breath among the flowers of Eden. Farewell, Giovanni! Thy words of hatred are like lead within my heart, but they too will fall away as I ascend. Oh, was there not from the first more poison in thy nature than in mine?"

To Beatrice—so radically had her earthly part been wrought upon by Rappaccini's skill—as poison had been life, so the powerful antidote was death. And thus the poor victim of man's ingenuity and of thwarted nature and of the fatality that attends all such efforts of perverted wisdom perished there at the feet of her father and Giovanni.

Just at that moment Professor Pietro Baglioni looked forth from the window and called loudly, in a tone of triumph mixed with horror, to the thunder-stricken man of science,

"Rappaccini, Rappaccini! And is *this* the upshot of your experiment?"

# THE PEARL OF LOVE

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H. G. WELLS

BORN: Bromley, Kent, September 21, 1866.

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THE PEARL IS LOVELIER than the most brilliant of crystalline stones, the moralist declares, because it is made through the suffering of a living creature. About that I can say nothing because I feel none of the fascination of pearls. Their cloudy lustre moves me not at all. Nor can I decide for myself upon that age-long dispute whether The Pearl of Love is the cruellest of stories or only a gracious fable of the immortality of beauty.

Both the story and the controversy will be familiar to students of mediaeval Persian prose. The story is a short one, though the commentary upon it is a respectable part of the literature of that period. They have treated it as a poetic invention and they have treated it as an allegory meaning this, that, or the other thing. Theologians have had their copious way with it, dealing with it particularly as concerning the restoration of the body after death, and it has been greatly used as a parable by those who write about aesthetics. And many have held it to be the statement of a fact, simply and baldly true.

The story is laid in North India, which is the most fruitful soil for sublime love stories of all the lands in the world. It was in a country of sunshine and lakes and rich forests and hills and fertile valleys; and far away the great mountains hung in the sky, peaks, crests, and ridges of inaccessible and eternal snow. There was a young prince, lord of all the land; and he found a maiden of indescribable beauty and delightfulness and he made her his queen and laid his heart at her feet. Love was theirs, full of joys and sweetness, full of hope, exquisite, brave and marvellous love, be-

yond anything you have ever dreamt of love. It was theirs for a year and a part of a year; and then suddenly because of some venomous sting that came to her in a thicket, she died.

She died and for a while the prince was utterly prostrated. He was silent and motionless with grief. They feared he might kill himself, and he had neither sons nor brothers to succeed him. For two days and nights he lay upon his face, fasting, across the foot of the couch which bore her calm and lovely body. Then he arose and ate, and went about very quietly like one who has taken a great resolution. He caused her body to be put in a coffin of lead mixed with silver, and for that he had an outer coffin made of the most precious and scented woods wrought with gold, and about that there was to be a sarcophagus of alabaster, inlaid with precious stones. And while these things were being done he spent his time for the most part by the pools and in the garden-houses and pavilions and groves and in those chambers in the palace where they two had been most together, brooding upon her loveliness. He did not rend his garments nor defile himself with ashes and sackcloth as the custom was, for his love was too great for such extravagances. At last he came forth again among his councillors and before the people, and told them what he had a mind to do.

He said he could never more touch woman, he could never more think of them, and so he would find a seemly youth to adopt for his heir and train him to his task, and that he would do his princely duties as became him; but that for the rest of it, he would give himself with all his power and all his strength and all his wealth, all that he could command, to make a monument worthy of his incomparable, dear, lost mistress. A building it should be of perfect grace and beauty, more marvellous than any other building had ever been or could ever be, so that to the end of time it should be a wonder, and men would treasure it and speak of it and desire to see it and come from all the lands of the earth to visit and recall the name and the memory of his queen. And this building he said was to be called the Pearl of Love.

And this his councillors and people permitted him to do, and so he did.

Year followed year, and all the years he devoted himself to

building and adorning the Pearl of Love. A great foundation was hewn out of the living rock in a place whence one seemed to be looking at the snowy wilderness of the great mountain across the valley of the world. Villages and hills there were, a winding river, and very far away three great cities. Here they put the sarcophagus of alabaster beneath a pavilion of cunning workmanship; and about it there were set pillars of strange and lovely stone and wrought and fretted walls, and a great casket of masonry bearing a dome and pinnacles and cupolas, as exquisite as a jewel. At first the design of the Pearl of Love was less bold and subtle than it became later. At first it was smaller and more wrought and encrusted; there were many pierced screens and delicate clusters of rosy-hued pillars, and the sarcophagus lay like a child that sleeps among flowers. The first dome was covered with green tiles, framed and held together by silver, but this was taken away again because it seemed close, because it did not soar grandly enough for the broadening imagination of the prince.

For by this time he was no longer the graceful youth who had loved the girl queen. He was now a man, grave and intent, wholly set upon the building of the Pearl of Love. With every year of effort he had learnt new possibilities in arch and wall and buttress; he had acquired greater power over the material he had to use and he had learnt of a hundred stones and hues and effects that he could never have thought of in the beginning. His sense of colour had grown finer and colder; he cared no more for the enamelled gold-lined brightness that had pleased him first, the brightness of an illuminated missal; he sought now for blue colourings like the sky and for the subtle hues of great distances, for recondite shadows and sudden broad floods of purple opalescence and for grandeur and space. He wearied altogether of carvings and pictures and inlaid ornamentation and all the little careful work of men. "Those were pretty things," he said of his earlier decorations; and had them put aside into subordinate buildings where they would not hamper his main design. Greater and greater grew his artistry. With awe and amazement people saw the Pearl of Love sweeping up from its first beginnings to a superhuman breadth and height and magnificence. They did not know clearly what they had expected, but never had they expected so sublime

a thing as this. "Wonderful are the miracles," they whispered, "that love can do," and all the women in the world, whatever other loves they had, loved the prince for the splendour of his devotion.

Through the middle of the building ran a great aisle, a vista, that the prince came to care for more and more. From the inner entrance of the building he looked along the length of an immense pillared gallery and across the central area from which the rose-hued columns had long since vanished, over the top of the pavilion under which lay the sarcophagus, through a marvellously designed opening, to the snowy wildernesses of the great mountain, the lord of all mountains, two hundred miles away. The pillars and arches and buttresses and galleries soared and floated on either side, perfect yet unobtrusive, like great archangels waiting in the shadows about the presence of God. When men saw that austere beauty for the first time they were exalted, and then they shivered and their hearts bowed down. Very often would the prince come to stand there and look at that vista, deeply moved and not yet fully satisfied. The Pearl of Love had still something for him to do, he felt, before his task was done. Always he would order some little alteration to be made or some recent alteration to be put back again. And one day he said that the sarcophagus would be clearer and simpler without the pavilion; and after regarding it very steadfastly for a long time, he had the pavilion dismantled and removed.

The next day he came and said nothing, and the next day and the next. Then for two days he stayed away altogether. Then he returned, bringing with him an architect and two master craftsmen and a small retinue.

All looked, standing together silently in a little group, amidst the serene vastness of their achievement. No trace of toil remained in its perfection. It was as if the God of Nature's beauty had taken over their offspring to himself.

Only one thing there was to mar the absolute harmony. There was a certain disproportion about the sarcophagus. It had never been enlarged, and indeed how could it have been enlarged since the early days? It challenged the eye; it nicked the streaming lines. In that sarcophagus was the casket of lead and silver, and



in the casket of lead and silver was the queen, the dear immortal cause of all this beauty. But now that sarcophagus seemed no more than a little dark oblong that lay incongruously in the great vista of the Pearl of Love. It was as if someone had dropped a small valise upon the crystal sea of heaven.

Long the prince mused, but no one knew the thoughts that passed through his mind.

At last he spoke. He pointed.

"Take that thing away," he said.

## VOX POPULI

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VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM

BORN: St. Brienc, November, 1838. DIED: Paris, August 19, 1889.

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GRAND REVIEW at the Champs-Elysees that day!

Twelve years have been suffered since that vision. A summer sun shattered its long arrows of gold against the roofs and domes of the ancient capital. Thousands of panes reflected its dazzling rays; the people, bathed in a powdery light, thronged the streets to gaze at the army.

Sitting upon a high wooden stool before the railing of the parvis of Notre Dame, his knees folded under black rags, his hands joined under the placard that legally sanctioned his blindness, the centenarian beggar, patriarch of the Misery of Paris—a mournful face of ashen tint, with skin furrowed by wrinkles of the color of earth—lent his shadowy presence to the *Te Deum* of the surrounding festival.

All these people, were they not his brethren? The joyous passers-by, were they not his kin? Were they not human, like him? Besides, that guest of the sovereign portal was not entirely destitute: the State had recognized his right to be blind.

Clothed with the title and respectability implied in the official right to receive alms, enjoying, moreover, a voter's privilege, he was our equal—except in light.

And that man, forgotten, as it were, among the living, articulated from time to time a monotonous plaint—evident syllabification of the profound sighs of his whole lifetime:

“Have pity on the blind, if you please!”

Around him, beneath the powerful vibrations fallen from the

belfry—outside, yonder, beyond the wall of his eyes—the trampling of cavalry, the intermittent braying of trumpets, acclamations mingled with salvoes of artillery from the *Invalides* with the proud shouts of command, the rattle of steel, and the thunder of drums scanning the interminable march of the passing infantry, a rumor of glory reached him! His trained hearing caught even the rustle of the floating standards whose heavy fringes brushed against the cuirasses. In the mind of the old captive of obscurity a thousand flashes of sensation evoked visions foreknown yet indistinct. A sort of divination informed him of what fevered the hearts and thoughts of the city.

And the people, fascinated, as always, by the prestige that comes from strokes of boldness and fortune, clamored its prayer of the moment:

“Long live the Emperor!”

But during the lulls of the triumphal tempest a lost voice arose in the direction of the mystic railing. The old man, his neck thrown back against the pillory of bars, rolling his dead eyeballs towards the sky, forgotten by that people of which he seemed alone to express the genuine prayer, the prayer hidden under the hurrahs, the secret and personal prayer, droned, like an augural interceder, his now mysterious phrase:

“Have pity on the blind, if you please!”

Grand review at the Champs-Elysees that day!

Now ten years have flown since the sun of that festival—same sounds, same voices, same smoke. A sordine, however, tempered the tumult of the public rejoicings. A shadow weighed on the eyes of all. The ceremonial salvoes from the platform of the Prytaneum were crossed this time by the distant growls of the batteries in our forts; and straining their ears, the people sought already to distinguish in the echoes the answer of the enemy’s approaching cannon.

The Governor, borne by the ambling trot of his thorough-bred, passed, smiling upon all. The people, reassured by the confidence which an irreproachable demeanor always inspires, alternated with patriotic songs the military applause with which they honored the presence of the soldier.

But the syllables of the furious cheer of yore had been modified; the distracted people preferred the prayer of the moment:

"Long live the Republic!"

And yonder, in the direction of the sublime threshold, could still be distinguished the solitary voice of Lazarus. The sayer of the hidden thought of the people did not modify the rigidity of his fixed plaint. Sincere soul of the festival, uplifting his extinguished eyes to the sky, he cried out, during the silences, with the accent of one making a statement:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

Grand review at the Champs-Elysees that day!

Now nine months have been endured since that troubled sun. Oh! same rumors, same clashing of arms, same neighing of horses, more muffled, however, than the previous year, but yet noisy.

"Long live the Commune!" shouted the people to the passing wind.

And the voice of the secular Elect of Misfortune still repeated, yonder upon the sacred threshold, his refrain that connected the unique thought of the people. Raising his trembling head to the sky, he moaned in the shadow:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

And two moons later, when to the last vibrations of the tocsin, the generalissimo of the regular forces of the State reviewed his two hundred thousand guns, still smoking, alas! from the sad civil war, the terrified people shouted, while gazing upon the edifices flaming afar:

"Long live the Marshal!"

Yonder, in the direction of the pure enclosure, the immutable voice of the veteran of human misery mechanically repeated his dolorous and piteous observation:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

And since then, from year to year, from review to review, from vociferations to vociferations, whatever might be the name thrown to the hazards of space by the cheering people, those who listen attentively to the sounds of the earth have always distinguished,

above the revolutionary clamors and the wailike festivals that followed, the far-away Voice, the true Voice, the intimate Voice of the terrible symbolical beggar, of the incorruptible sentinel of the citizens' conscience, of him who restores integrally the occult prayer of the Crowd and expresses its sighs.

Inflexible Pontiff of fraternity, that authorized titulary of physical blindness, has never ceased, like an unconscious mediator, to invoke the divine charity upon his brethren in intelligence.

And when, intoxicated with fanfares, with peals of bells and with artillery, the people, dazed by the flattering uproar, endeavors vainly, under whatever syllables falsely enthusiastic, to hide from itself its veritable prayer, the beggar, groping through the sky, his arms uplifted, his face towards the heavy darkness, arises on the eternal threshold of the church, and in tones more and more lamentable, which seem, however, to carry beyond the stars, continues to cry his prophetic rectification:

"Have pity on the blind, if you please!"

# THE VALIANT

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## HOLWORTHY HALL

BORN: Boston, September 19, 1887. DIED: Torrington, Conn., June 20, 1936.

*in collaboration with*

ROBERT MIDDLEMASS

Survives

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## SCENE

The Warden's office in the State's Prison at  
Wethersfield, Connecticut.

## TIME

About half-past eleven on a rainy night.

The curtain rises upon the WARDEN's office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield, Connecticut. It is a large, cold, unfriendly apartment, with bare floors and staring, whitewashed walls; it is furnished only with the WARDEN's flat-topped desk, and swivel-chair, with a few straight-backed chairs, one beside the desk and others against the walls, with a water-cooler and an eight-day clock. On the WARDEN's desk are a telephone instrument, a row of electric push-buttons, and a bundle of forty or fifty letters. At the back of the room are two large windows, crossed with heavy bars; at the left there is a door to an anteroom, and at the right there are two doors, of which the more distant leads to the office of the deputy warden, and the nearer is seldom used.

WARDEN HOLT, dressed in a dark brown sack suit, with a

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negligee shirt and black string-tie, carelessly knotted in a bow, is seated at his desk, reflectively smoking a long, thin cigar. He is verging toward sixty, and his responsibilities have printed themselves in italics upon his countenance. His brown hair, and bushy eyebrows are heavily shot with gray; there is a deep parenthesis of wrinkles at the corners of his mouth and innumerable fine lines about his eyes. His bearing indicates that he is accustomed to rank as a despot, and yet his expression is far from that of an unreasoning tyrant. He is no sentimentalist, but he believes that in each of us there is a constant oscillation of good and evil; and that all evil should be justly punished in this world, and that all good should be generously rewarded—in the next.

Behind the WARDEN, the prison chaplain stands at one of the barred windows, gazing steadily out into the night. FATHER DALY is a slender, white-haired priest of somewhat more than middle age; he is dressed in slightly shabby clericals. His face is calm, intellectual and inspiring; but just at this moment, it gives evidence of a peculiar depression.

The WARDEN blows a cloud of smoke to the ceiling, inspects the cigar critically, drums on the desk, and finally peers over his shoulder at the chaplain. He clears his throat and speaks brusquely.

THE WARDEN. Has it started to rain?

FATHER DALY (answers without turning). Yes, it has.

THE WARDEN (glaring at his cigar and impatiently tossing it aside). It would rain tonight. (His tone is vaguely resentful, as though the weather had added a needless fraction to his impatience.)

FATHER DALY (glances at a big silver watch). It's past eleven o'clock. (He draws a deep breath and comes slowly to the center of the room.) We haven't much longer to wait.

THE WARDEN. No, thank God! (He gets up, and goes to the water-cooler; with the glass half-way to his lips he pauses.) Was he quiet when you left him?

FATHER DALY (a trifle abstractedly). Yes, yes, he was perfectly calm and I believe he'll stay so to the very end.

THE WARDEN (finishes his drink, comes back to his desk, and lights a fresh cigar). You've got to hand it to him, Father; I never

saw such nerve in all my life. It isn't bluff, and it isn't a trance, either, like some of 'em have—it's plain nerve. You've certainly got to hand it to him. (*He shakes his head in frank admiration.*)

FATHER DALY (*sorrowfully*). That's the pity of it—that a man with all his courage hasn't a better use for it. Even now, it's very difficult for me to reconcile his character, as I see it, with what we know he's done.

THE WARDEN (*continues to shake his head*). He's got my goat, all right.

FATHER DALY (*with a slight grimace*). Yes, and he's got mine, too.

THE WARDEN. When he sent for you tonight, I hoped he was going to talk.

FATHER DALY. He did talk, very freely.

THE WARDEN. What about?

FATHER DALY (*smiles faintly, and sits beside the desk.*) Most everything.

THE WARDEN (*looks up quickly*). Himself?

FATHER DALY. No. That seems to be the only subject he isn't interested in.

THE WARDEN (*sits up to his desk, and leans upon it with both elbows*). He still won't give you any hint about who he really is?

FATHER DALY. Not the slightest. He doesn't intend to, either. He intends to die as a man of mystery to us. Sometimes I wonder if he isn't just as much of a mystery to himself.

THE WARDEN. Oh, he's trying to shield somebody, that's all. James Dyke isn't his right name—we know that; and we know all the rest of his story is a fake, too. Well, where's his motive? I'll tell you where it is. It's to keep his family and his friends, wherever they are, from knowing what's happened to him. Lots of 'em have the same idea but I never knew one to carry it as far as this, before. You've certainly got to hand it to him. All we know is that we've got a man under sentence; and we don't know who he is, or where he comes from, or anything else about him, any more than we did four months ago.

FATHER DALY. It takes moral courage for a man to shut himself away from his family and his friends like that. They would have comforted him.



THE WARDEN. Not necessarily. What time is it?

FATHER DALY. Half-past eleven.

THE WARDEN (*rises and walks over to peer out of one of the barred windows*). I guess I'm getting too old for this sort of thing. A necktie party didn't use to bother me so much; but every time one comes along nowadays, I've got the blue devils beforehand and afterward. And this one is just about the limit.

FATHER DALY. It certainly isn't a pleasant duty even with the worst of them.

THE WARDEN (*wheels back abruptly*). But what gets me is why I should hate this one more than any of the others. The boy is guilty as hell.

FATHER DALY. Yes, he killed a man. "Wilfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought."

THE WARDEN. And he pleaded guilty. So he deserves just what he's going to get.

FATHER DALY. That is the law. But has it ever occurred to you, Warden, that every now and then when a criminal behaves in a rather gentlemanly fashion to us, we instinctively think of him as just a little less of a criminal?

THE WARDEN. Yes, it has. But, all the same, this front of his makes me as nervous as the devil. He pleaded guilty all right, but he don't act guilty. I feel just as if tonight I was going to do something every bit as criminal as he did. I can't help it. And when I get to feeling like that, why, I guess it's pretty nearly time I sent in my resignation.

FATHER DALY (*reflectively*). His whole attitude has been very remarkable. Why, only a few minutes ago I found myself comparing it with the fortitude that the Christian martyrs carried to their death, and yet—

THE WARDEN. He's no martyr.

FATHER DALY. I know it. And he's anything in the world but a Christian. That was just what I was going to say.

THE WARDEN. Has he got any religious streak in him at all?

FATHER DALY. I'm afraid he hasn't. He listens to me very attentively, but— (*He shrugs his shoulders.*) It's only because I offer him companionship. Anybody else would do quite as well—and any other topic would suit him better.

THE WARDEN. Well, if he wants to face God as a heathen, we can't force him to change his mind.

FATHER DALY (with gentle reproach). No, but we can never give up trying to save his immortal soul. And his soul tonight seems as dark and foreboding to me as a haunted house would seem to the small boys down in Wethersfield. But I haven't given up hope.

THE WARDEN. No—you wouldn't.

FATHER DALY. Are you going to talk with him again yourself?

THE WARDEN (opens a drawer of his desk, and brings out a large envelope). I'll have to. I've still got some Liberty Bonds that belong to him. (He gazes at the envelope, and smiles grimly.) That was a funny thing—when the newspaper syndicate offered him twenty-five hundred for his autobiography, he jumped at it so quick I was sure he wanted the money for something or other. (He slaps the envelope on the desk.) But now the bonds are here, waiting for him, he won't say what to do with 'em. Know why? (FATHER DALY shakes his head.) Why, of course you do! Because the story he wrote was pure bunk from start to finish and the only reason he jumped at the chance of writing it was so's he could pull the wool over everybody's head a little farther. He don't want the bonds, but I've got to do something with 'em. (He pushes a button on the desk.) And besides, I want to make one more try at finding out who he is.

FATHER DALY. Shall I go with you to see him or do you want to see him alone?

THE WARDEN (sits deliberating with one hand at his forehead, and the other hand tapping the desk). Father, you gave me a thought—I believe I'm going to do something tonight that's never been done before in this prison—that is to say—not in all the twenty-eight years that I've been warden.

FATHER DALY. What's that?

THE WARDEN (who has evidently come to an important decision, raps the desk more forcibly with his knuckles). Instead of our going to see him, I'll have that boy brought into this office and let him sit here with you and me until the time comes for us all to walk through that door to the execution room.

FATHER DALY (startled). What on earth is your idea in doing a thing like that?

THE WARDEN. Because maybe if he sits here awhile with just you and me, and we go at him right, he'll loosen up and tell us about himself. It'll be different from being in his cell; it'll be sort of free and easy, and maybe he'll weaken. And then, besides, if we take him to the scaffold through this passage-way, maybe I can keep the others quiet. If they don't know when the job's being done, they may behave 'emselves. I don't want any such yelling and screeching tonight as we had with that Greek. (*A JAILER in blue uniform enters from the deputy's room and stands waiting.*) Dan, I want you to get Dyke and bring him to me here. (*The JAILER stares blankly at him and the WARDEN's voice takes on an added note of authority.*) Get Dyke and bring him in here to me.

THE JAILER. Yes, sir. (*He starts to obey the order but halts in the doorway and turns as the WARDEN speaks again. It is apparent that the WARDEN is a strict disciplinarian of the prison staff.*)

THE WARDEN. Oh, Dan!

THE JAILER. Yes, sir?

THE WARDEN. How nearly ready are they?

THE JAILER. They'll be all set in ten or fifteen minutes, sir. Twenty minutes at the outside.

THE WARDEN (*very sharp and magisterial*). Now, I don't want any hitch or delay in this thing tonight. If there is, somebody's going to get in awful Dutch with me. Pass that along.

THE JAILER. There won't be none, sir.

THE WARDEN. When everything's ready—not a second before—you let me know.

THE JAILER. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. I'll be right here with Dyke and Father Daly.

THE JAILER (*eyes widening*). Here?

THE WARDEN (*peremptorily*). Yes, here!

THE JAILER (*crushes down his astonishment*). Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. When everything and everybody is ready, you come from the execution room through the passage— (*He gestures toward the nearer door on the right.*) open that door quietly and stand there.

THE JAILER. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. You don't have to say anything, and I don't want you to say anything. Just stand there. That all clear?

THE JAILER. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. That'll be the signal for us to start—understand?

THE JAILER. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN (*draws a deep breath*). All right. Now bring Dyke to me.

THE JAILER. Yes, sir. (*He goes out dazedly.*)

FATHER DALY. What about the witnesses and the reporters?

THE WARDEN. They're having their sandwiches and coffee now—the deputy'll have 'em seated in another ten or fifteen minutes. Let 'em wait. (*His voice becomes savage.*) I'd like to poison the lot of 'em. Reporters! Witnesses! (*The telephone bell rings.*) Hello—yes—yes—what's that?—Yes, yes, right here—who wants him? (*To FATHER DALY.*) Father, it's the Governor! (*His expression is tense.*)

FATHER DALY (*his voice also gives evidence of incredulity and hope*). What! (*He walks swiftly over to the desk.*) Is it about Dyke?

THE WARDEN. Ssh. (*He turns to the telephone.*) Yes, this is Warden Holt speaking. Hello—oh, hello, Governor Fuller, how are you? Oh, I'm between grass and hay, thanks. Well, this isn't my idea of a picnic exactly—yes—yes— Oh, I should say in about half an hour or so—everything's just about ready. (*His expression gradually relaxes, and FATHER DALY, with a little sigh and shake of the head, turns away.*) Oh, no, there won't be any slip-up—yes, we made the regular tests, one this afternoon and another at nine o'clock tonight— Oh, no, Governor, nothing can go wrong— Well, according to the law I've got to get it done as soon as possible after midnight, but you're the Governor of the state—How long?—Certainly, Governor, I can hold it off as long as you want me to— What say?—A girl!—You're going to send her to me?—you have sent her!—she ought to be here by this time?—All right, Governor, I'll ring you up when it's over. Good-bye. (*He hangs up the receiver, mops his forehead with his handkerchief, and turns to FATHER DALY in great excitement.*) Did you get that? Some girl thinks Dyke's her long-lost brother, and she's persuaded the old man to let her come out here tonight—he wants me to hold up the job until she'd had a chance to see him. She's due here any minute, he says—in his own car—escorted by his own private secretary! Can you beat it?

FATHER DALY (downcast). Poor girl!

THE WARDEN (blots his forehead vigorously). For a minute there I thought it was going to be a reprieve at the very least. Whew!

FATHER DALY. So did I.

(The door from the deputy's room is opened, and DYKE comes in, followed immediately by the JAILER. DYKE halts just inside the door and waits passively to be told what to do next. He has a lean, pale face, with a high forehead, good eyes, and a strong chin; his mouth is ruled in a firm straight line. His wavy hair is prematurely gray. His figure has the elasticity of youth, but he might pass among strangers either as a man of forty, or as a man of twenty-five, depending upon the mobility of his features at a given moment. He is dressed in a dark shirt open at the throat, dark trousers without belt or suspenders, and soft slippers. The JAILER receives a nod from the WARDEN, and goes out promptly, closing the door behind him.)

THE WARDEN (swings half-way around in his swivel-chair). Sit down, Dyke. (He points to the chair at the right of his desk.)

DYKE. Thanks. (He goes directly to the chair and sits down.)

THE WARDEN (leans back, and surveys him thoughtfully. FATHER DALY remains in the background). Dyke, you've been here under my charge for nearly four months and I want to tell you that from first to last you've behaved yourself like a gentleman.

DYKE (his manner is vaguely cynical without being in the least impertinent). Why should I make you any trouble?

THE WARDEN. Well, you haven't made me any trouble, and I've tried to show what I think about it. I've made you every bit as comfortable as the law would let me.

DYKE. You've been very kind to me. (He glances over his shoulder at the chaplain.) And you, too, Father.

THE WARDEN. I've had you brought in here to stay from now on. (DYKE looks inquiringly at him.) No, you won't have to go back to your cell again. You're to stay right here with Father Daly and me.

DYKE (carelessly). All right.

THE WARDEN (piqued by his cool reception of the distinguished

favor). You don't seem to understand that I'm doing something a long way out of the ordinary for you.

DYKE. Oh, yes, I do, but maybe you don't understand why it doesn't give me much of a thrill.

FATHER DALY (*comes forward*). My son, the Warden is only trying to do you one more kindness.

DYKE. I know he is, Father, but the Warden isn't taking very much of a gamble. From now on, one place is about the same as another.

THE WARDEN. What do you mean?

DYKE (*his voice is very faintly sarcastic*). Why, I mean that I'm just as much a condemned prisoner here as when I was in my cell. That door (*he points to it*) leads right back to my cell. Outside those windows are armed guards every few feet. You yourself can't get through the iron door in that anteroom (*he indicates the door to the left*) until somebody on the outside unlocks it; and I know as well as you do where that door (*he points to the nearer door on the right*) leads to.

THE WARDEN (*stiffly*). Would you rather wait in your cell?

DYKE. Oh, no, this is a little pleasanter. Except—

THE WARDEN. Except what?

DYKE. In my cell, I could smoke.

THE WARDEN (*shrugs his shoulders*). What do you want—cigar or cigarette?

DYKE. A cigarette, if it's all the same.

(*The WARDEN opens a drawer of his desk, takes out a box of cigarettes, removes one and hands it to DYKE. The WARDEN striking a match, lights DYKE's cigarette, and then carefully puts out the match.*)

DYKE (*smiles faintly*). Thanks. You're a good host.

THE WARDEN. Dyke, before it's too late I wish you'd think over what Father Daly and I've said to you so many times.

DYKE. I've thought of nothing else.

THE WARDEN. Then—as man to man—and this is your last chance—who are you?

DYKE (*inspects his cigarette*). Who am I? James Dyke—a murderer.

THE WARDEN. That isn't your real name and we know it.

DYKE. You're not going to execute a name—you're going to execute a man. What difference does it make whether you call me Dyke or something else?

THE WARDEN. You had another name once. What was it?

DYKE. If I had, I've forgotten it.

FATHER DALY. Your mind is made up, my son?

DYKE. Yes, Father, it is.

THE WARDEN. Dyke.

DYKE. Yes, sir

THE WARDEN. Do you see this pile of letters? (*He places his hand over it.*)

DYKE. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN (*fingers them*). Every one of these letters is about the same thing and all put together we've got maybe four thousand of 'em. These here are just a few samples.

DYKE. What about them?

THE WARDEN. We've had letters from every State in the Union and every province in Canada. We've had fifteen or twenty from England, four or five from France, two from Australia and one from Russia.

DYKE. Well?

THE WARDEN (*inclines toward him*). Do you know what every one of those letters says—what four thousand different people are writing to me about?

DYKE. No, sir.

THE WARDEN (*speaks slowly and impressively*). Who are you—and are you the missing son—or brother—or husband—or sweet-heart?

DYKE (*flicks his cigarette ashes to the floor*). Have you answered them?

THE WARDEN. No, I couldn't. I want you to.

DYKE. How's that?

THE WARDEN. I want you to tell me who you are. (*DYKE shakes his head.*) Can't you see you ought to do it?

DYKE. No, sir, I can't exactly see that. Suppose you explain it to me.

THE WARDEN (*suddenly*). You're trying to shield somebody, aren't you?"

DYKE. Yes—no, I'm not!

THE WARDEN (*glances at FATHER DALY and nods with elation*). Who is it? Your family?

DYKE. I said I'm not.

THE WARDEN. But first, you said you were.

DYKE. That was a slip of the tongue.

THE WARDEN (*has grown persuasive*). Dyke, just listen to me a minute. Don't be narrow, look at this thing in a big, broad way. Suppose you should tell me your real name, and I publish it, it'll bring an awful lot of sorrow, let's say, to one family, one home, and that's your own. That's probably what you're thinking about. Am I right? You want to spare your family and I don't blame you. On the surface, it sure would look like a mighty white thing for you to do. But look at it this way: suppose you came out with the truth, flat-footed, why, you might put all that sorrow into one home—your own—but at the same time you'd be putting an immense amount of relief in four thousand—others. Don't you get that? Don't you figure you owe something to all these other people?

DYKE. Not a thing.

FATHER DALY (*has been fidgeting*). My boy, the Warden is absolutely right. You do owe something to the other people—you owe them peace of mind—and for the sake of all those thousands of poor, distressed women, who imagine God knows what, I beg of you to tell us who you are.

DYKE. Father, I simply can't do it.

FATHER DALY. Think carefully, my boy, think very carefully. We're not asking out of idle curiosity.

DYKE. I know that, but please don't let's talk about it any more. (*To the WARDEN.*) You can answer those letters whenever you want to, and you can say I'm not the man they're looking for. That'll be the truth, too. Because I haven't any mother—or father—or sister—or wife—or sweetheart. That's fair enough, isn't it?

FATHER DALY (*sighs wearily*). As you will, my son.

THE WARDEN. Dyke, there's one more thing.

DYKE. Yes?

THE WARDEN. Here are the Liberty Bonds (*he takes up the*



large envelope from his desk) that belong to you. Twenty-five hundred dollars in real money.

DYKE (removes the bonds and examines them). Good-looking, aren't they?

THE WARDEN (casually). What do you want me to do with them?

DYKE. Well, I can't very well take them with me, so, under the circumstances, I'd like to put them where they'll do the most good.

THE WARDEN (more casually yet). Who do you want me to send 'em to?

DYKE (laughs quietly). Now, Warden Holt, you didn't think you were going to catch me that way, did you?

THE WARDEN (scowls). Who'll I send 'em to? I can't keep 'em here, and I can't destroy 'em. What do you want to do with 'em?

DYKE (ponders diligently and tosses the envelope to the desk). I don't know. I'll think of something to do with them. I'll tell you in just a minute. Is there anything else?

THE WARDEN. Not unless you want to make some sort of statement.

DYKE. No, I guess I've said everything. I killed a man and I'm not sorry for it—that is, I'm not sorry I killed that particular person. I—

FATHER DALY (raises his hand). Repentance—

DYKE (raises his own hand in turn). I've heard that repentance, Father, is the sick bed of the soul—and mine is very well and flourishing. The man deserved to be killed; he wasn't fit to live. It was my duty to kill him, and I did it. I'd never struck a man in anger in all my life, but when I knew what that fellow had done, I knew I had to kill him, and I did it deliberately and intentionally—and carefully. I knew what I was doing, and I haven't any excuse—that is, I haven't any excuse that satisfies the law. Now, I learned pretty early in life that whatever you do in this world you have to pay for in one way or another. If you kill a man, the price you have to pay is this (he makes a gesture which sweeps the entire room) and that (he points to the nearer door on the right) and I'm going to pay it. That's all there is to that. And an hour from now, while my body is lying in there, if

a couple of angel policemen grab my soul and haul it up before God—

FATHER DALY (*profoundly shocked*). My boy, my boy, please—

DYKE. I beg pardon, Father. I don't mean to trample on anything that's sacred to you, but what I do mean to say is this: If I've got to be judged by God Almighty for the crime of murder, I'm not afraid, because the other fellow will certainly be there, too, won't he? And when God hears the whole story and both sides of it, which you never heard and never will—and they never heard it in the court room, either—why, then, if he's any kind of a God at all, I'm willing to take my chances with the other fellow. That's how concerned I am about the hereafter. And, if it'll make you feel any better, Father, why I do rather think there's going to be a hereafter. I read a book once that said a milligram of musk will give out perfume for seven thousand years, and a milligram of radium will give out light for seventy thousand. Why shouldn't a soul—mine, for instance—live more than twenty-seven? But if there isn't any hereafter—if we just die and are dead and that's all—why, I'm still not sorry and I'm not afraid, because I'm quits with the other fellow—the law is quits with me, and it's all balanced on the books. And that's all there is to that. (*An attendant enters from the anteroom.*)

THE WARDEN. Well? What is it?

THE ATTENDANT. Visitor to see you, sir. With note from Governor Fuller. (*He presents it.*)

THE WARDEN (*Barely glances at the envelope*). Oh! A young woman?

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. Is Mrs. Case there?

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. Have the girl searched, and then take her into the anteroom and wait till I call you.

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir. (*He goes out.*)

THE WARDEN. Dyke, a young woman has just come to see you—do you want to see her?

DYKE. I don't think so. What does she want?

THE WARDEN. She thinks maybe she's your sister, and she's come a thousand miles to find out.

DYKE. She's wrong. I haven't any sister.

THE WARDEN (*Hesitates*). Will I tell her that, or do you want to tell it to her yourself?

DYKE. Oh, you tell her.

THE WARDEN. All right. (*He starts to rise but resumes his seat as DYKE speaks.*)

DYKE. Just a second—she's come a thousand miles to see me, did you say?

THE WARDEN. Yes, and she's got special permission from the Governor to talk to you—that is, with my O. K.

DYKE. A year ago, nobody'd have crossed the street to look at me, and now they come a thousand miles!

FATHER DALY. This is one of your debts to humanity, my boy. It wouldn't take you two minutes to see her, and, if you don't, after she's made that long journey in hope and dread and suffering—

DYKE. Where can I talk with her—here?

THE WARDEN. Yes.

DYKE. Alone? (*The WARDEN is doubtful.*) Why, you don't need to be afraid. I haven't the faintest idea who the girl is, but if she happens to be some poor misguided sentimental fool, with a gun or a pocket full of cyanide of potassium, she's wasting her time. I wouldn't cheat the sovereign state of Connecticut for anything in the world—not even to please a young lady.

THE WARDEN. Dyke, there's something about you that gets everybody.

DYKE. How about the jury?

THE WARDEN. You've got a sort of way with you—

DYKE. How about that spread-eagle district attorney?

THE WARDEN. I'm going to let you talk with that girl in here—alone.

DYKE. Thanks.

THE WARDEN. It's a sort of thing that's never been done before, but if I put you on your honor—

DYKE (*cynically*). My honor! Thank you, so much.

FATHER DALY. Warden, are you sure it's wise?

DYKE. Father, I'm disappointed in you. Do you imagine I'd do

anything that could reflect on Warden Holt—or you—or the young lady—or me?

THE WARDEN. Father, will you take Dyke into the deputy's room? I want to speak to the young lady first.

FATHER DALY. Certainly. Come, my boy.

(FATHER DALY and DYKE start toward the deputy's room.)

THE WARDEN. I'll call you in just a couple of minutes.

DYKE. We promise not to run away. (They go out together.)

THE WARDEN (calls). Wilson! (The ATTENDANT enters from the left.)

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. Is the girl there?

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. Frisked?

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. Everything all right?

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN (throws away his cigar). Bring her in.

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir. (He speaks through the door at the left.) Step this way, Miss. This here's the Warden.

(A young girl appears on the threshold, and casts about in mingled curiosity and apprehension. She is fresh and wholesome, and rather pretty; but her manner betrays a certain spiritual aloofness from the ultra-modern world—a certain delicate reticence of the flesh—which immediately separates her from the metropolitan class. Indeed, she is dressed far too simply for a metropolitan girl of her age; she wears a blue tailored suit with deep white cuffs and a starched white sailor-collar, and a small blue hat which fits snugly over her fluffy hair. Her costume is not quite conservative enough to be literally old-fashioned, but it hints at the taste and repression of an old-fashioned home.

She is neither timid nor aggressive; she is self-unconscious. She looks at the WARDEN squarely, but not in boldness, and yet not in feminine appeal; she has rather the fearlessness of a girl who has lost none of her illusions about men in general. Her expression is essentially serious; it conveys, however, the idea that her seriousness is due to her present mission, and

that ordinarily she takes an active joy in the mere pleasure of existence.)

THE WARDEN (he had expected a very different type of visitor, so that he is somewhat taken aback). All right, Wilson.

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir. (He goes out.)

THE WARDEN (with grave deference, half rises). Will you sit down?

THE GIRL. Why—thank you very much. (She sits in the chair beside the desk and regards him trustfully.)

THE WARDEN (he is palpably affected by her youth and innocence, and he is not quite sure how best to proceed, but eventually he makes an awkward beginning). You've had an interview with the Governor, I understand?

THE GIRL. Yes, sir. I was with him almost an hour.

THE WARDEN. And you want to see Dyke, do you?

THE GIRL. Yes, sir. I hope I'm not—too late.

THE WARDEN. No, you're not too late. (He is appraising her carefully.) But I want to ask you a few questions beforehand. (Her reaction of uncertainty induces him to soften his tone.) There isn't anything to get upset about. I just want to make it easier for you, not harder. Where do you live?

THE GIRL. In Ohio.

THE WARDEN (very kindly). What place?

THE GIRL. In Pennington, sir. It's a little town not far from Columbus.

THE WARDEN. And you live out there with your father and mother?

THE GIRL. No, sir—just my mother and I. My father died when I was a little baby.

THE WARDEN. Why didn't your mother come here herself, instead of sending you?

THE GIRL. She couldn't. She's sick.

THE WARDEN. I see. Have you any brothers or sisters?

THE GIRL (slightly more at ease). Just one brother, sir—this one. He and I were the only children. We were very fond of each other.

THE WARDEN. He was considerably older than you?

THE GIRL. Oh, yes. He's ten years older.

THE WARDEN. Why did he leave home?

THE GIRL. I don't really know, sir, except he just wanted to be in the city. Pennington's pretty small.

THE WARDEN. How long is it since you've seen him?

THE GIRL. It's eight years.

THE WARDEN (*his voice is almost paternal*). As long as that? Hm! And how old are you now?

THE GIRL. I'm almost eighteen.

THE WARDEN (*repeats slowly*). Almost eighteen. Hm! And are you sure after all this time you'd recognize your brother if you saw him?

THE GIRL. Well—(*she looks down, as if embarrassed to make the admission*).—of course I think so, but maybe I couldn't. You see, I was only a little girl when he went away—he wasn't a bad boy, sir, I don't think he could ever be really bad—but if this is my brother, why he's been in a great deal of trouble and you know that trouble makes people look different.

THE WARDEN. Yes, it does. But what makes you think this man Dyke may be your brother—and why didn't you think of it sooner? The case has been in the papers for the last six months.

THE GIRL. Why, it wasn't until last Tuesday that mother saw a piece in the *Journal*—that's the Columbus paper—that he'd written all about himself, and there was one little part of it that sounded so like Joe—like the funny way he used to say things—and then there was a picture that looked the least little bit like him—well, mother just wanted me to come East and find out for sure.

THE WARDEN. It's too bad she couldn't come herself. She'd probably know him whether he'd changed or not.

THE GIRL. Yes, sir. But I'll do the best I can.

THE WARDEN. When was the last time you heard from him, and where was he, and what was he doing?

THE GIRL. Why, it's about five or six years since we had a letter from Joe. He was in Seattle, Washington.

THE WARDEN. What doing?

THE GIRL. I don't remember. At home, though, he worked in the stationery store. He liked books.

THE WARDEN (*suspiciously*). Why do you suppose he didn't write home?

THE GIRL. I—couldn't say. He was just—thoughtless.

THE WARDEN. Wasn't in trouble of any kind?

THE GIRL. Oh, no! Never. That is—unless he's—here now.

THE WARDEN (*deliberates*). How are you going to tell him?

THE GIRL. I don't know what you mean.

THE WARDEN. Why, you say maybe you wouldn't know him even if you saw him—and I'll guarantee this man Dyke won't help you out very much. How do you think you're going to tell? Suppose he don't want to be recognized by you or anybody else? Suppose he's so ashamed of himself he—

THE GIRL. I'd thought of that. I'm just going to talk to him—ask him questions—about things he and I used to do together—I'll watch his face, and if he's my brother, I'm sure I can tell.

THE WARDEN (*with tolerant doubt*). What did you and your brother ever use to do that would help you out now?

THE GIRL. He used to play games with me when I was a little girl, and tell me stories—that's what I'm counting on mostly—the stories.

THE WARDEN. I'm afraid—

THE GIRL. Especially Shakespeare stories.

THE WARDEN. Shakespeare!

THE GIRL. Why, yes. He used to get the plots of the plays—all the Shakespeare plays—out of a book by a man named Lamb, and then he'd tell me the stories in his own words. It was wonderful!

THE WARDEN. I'm certainly afraid he—

THE GIRL. But best of all he'd learn some of the speeches from the plays themselves. He liked to do it—he was sure he was going to be an actor or something—he was in all the high school plays, always. And then he'd teach some of the speeches to me, and we'd say them to each other. And one thing—every night he'd sit side of my bed, and when I got sleepy there were two speeches we'd always say to each other, like good-night—two speeches out of *Romeo and Juliet*, and then I'd go to sleep. I can see it all. (*The WARDEN shakes his head.*) Why do you do that?

THE WARDEN. This boy isn't your brother.

THE GIRL. Do you think he isn't?

THE WARDEN. I know he isn't.

THE GIRL. How do you?

THE WARDEN. This boy never heard of Shakespeare—much less learned him. (He presses a button on his desk.) Oh, I'll let you see him for yourself, only you might as well be prepared. (The ATTENDANT enters from the anteroom.) Tell Dyke and Father Daly to come in here—they're in the deputy's room.

THE ATTENDANT. Yes, sir. (He crosses behind the WARDEN and goes off to the right.)

THE WARDEN. If he turns out to be your brother—which he won't—you can have, say, an hour with him. If he don't, you'll oblige me by cutting it as short as you can.

THE GIRL. You see, I've got to tell mother something perfectly definite. She's worried so long about him, and—and now the suspense is perfectly terrible for her.

THE WARDEN. I can understand that. You're a plucky girl.

THE GIRL. Of course, it would be awful for us if this is Joe but even that would be better for mother than just to stay awake nights, and wonder and wonder, and never know what became of him. (The ATTENDANT opens the door of the Deputy's room and when DYKE and FATHER DALY have come in, he crosses again behind the WARDEN, and is going out at the left when the WARDEN signs to him and he stops.)

THE WARDEN (gets to his feet). Dyke, this is the young lady that's come all the way from Pennington, Ohio, to see you.

DYKE (who has been talking in an undertone to FATHER DALY, raises his head quickly). Yes, sir?

THE WARDEN. I've decided you can talk with her here—alone. (The GIRL has risen, breathless, and stands fixed; DYKE inspects her coldly from head to foot.)

DYKE. Thank you. It won't take long.

THE WARDEN (has been scanning the girl's expression; now, as he sees that she has neither recognized DYKE nor failed to recognize him, he makes a little grimace in confirmation of his own judgment). Father Daly and I'll stay in the deputy's office. We'll leave the door open. Wilson, you stand in the anteroom with the door open.

DYKE (bitterly). My honor!

THE WARDEN. What say?



DYKE. I didn't say anything.

THE WARDEN (to the GIRL). Will you please remember what I told you about the time?

THE GIRL. Oh, yes, sir.

THE WARDEN. Come, Father. (They go off into the Deputy's room, and the ATTENDANT, at a nod from the WARDEN, goes off at the left.)

(DYKE and the GIRL are now facing each other; DYKE is well-poised and insouciant and gives the impression of complete indifference to the moment. The GIRL, on the other hand, is deeply agitated and her agitation is gradually increased by DYKE's own attitude.)

THE GIRL (after several efforts to speak). Mother sent me to see you.

DYKE (politely callous). Yes?

THE GIRL (compelled to drop her eyes). You see, we haven't seen or heard of my brother Joe for ever so long, and mother thought—after what we read in the papers—

DYKE. That I might be your brother Joe?

THE GIRL (obviously relieved). Yes, that's it.

DYKE. Well, you can easily see that I'm not your brother, can't you?

THE GIRL (stares at him again). I'm not sure. You look a little like him, just as the picture in the paper did, but then again, it's so long—(she shakes her head dubiously) and I'd thought of Joe so differently—

DYKE (his manner is somewhat indulgent, as though to a child). As a matter of fact, I couldn't be your brother, or anybody else's brother, because I never had a sister. So that rather settles it.

THE GIRL. Honestly?

DYKE. Honestly.

THE GIRL (unconvinced, becomes more appealing). What's your real name?

DYKE. Dyke—James Dyke.

THE GIRL. That's sure enough your name?

DYKE. Sure enough. You don't think I'd tell a lie at this stage of the game, do you?

THE GIRL (musing). No, I don't believe you would. Where do you come from—I mean where were you born?

DYKE. In Canada, but I've lived all over.

THE GIRL. Didn't you ever live in Ohio?

DYKE. No. Never.

THE GIRL. What kind of work did you do—what was your business?

DYKE. Oh, I'm sort of Jack-of-all-trades. I've been everything a man could be—except a success.

THE GIRL. Do you like books?

DYKE. Books?

THE GIRL. Yes—books to read.

DYKE. I don't read when there's anything better to do. I've read a lot here.

THE GIRL. Did you ever sell books—for a living, I mean?

DYKE. Oh, no.

THE GIRL (*growing confused*). I hope you don't mind my asking so many questions. But I—

DYKE. No—go ahead, if it'll relieve your mind any.

THE GIRL. You went to school somewhere, of course,—high school?

DYKE. No, I never got that far.

THE GIRL. Did you ever want to be an actor? Or were you ever?

DYKE. No, just a convict.

THE GIRL (*helplessly*). Do you know any poetry?

DYKE. Not to speak of.

THE GIRL (*delays a moment, and then, watching him very earnestly, she recites just above her breath*).

Thou knowst the mask of night is on my face  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which—

(*Realizing that DYKE's expression is one of utter vacuity she falters, and breaks off the quotation, but she continues to watch him unwaveringly.*) Don't you know what that is?

DYKE. No, but to tell the truth, it sounds sort of silly to me. Doesn't it to you?

THE GIRL (*her intonation has become slightly forlorn, but she gathers courage, and puts him to one more test*).

Good-night, good-night, parting is such sweet sorrow  
That I shall say good-night till it be morrow.

DYKE (*his mouth twitches in amusement*). Eh?

THE GIRL. What comes next?

DYKE. Good Lord, I don't know.

THE GIRL (*gazes intently, almost imploringly, at him as though she is making a struggle to read his mind. Then she relaxes and holds out her hand*). Good-bye. You—you're not Joe, are you? I—had to come and find out, though. I hope I've not made you too unhappy.

DYKE (*ignores her hand*). You're not going now?

THE GIRL (*spiritless*). Yes. I promised the—is he the Warden? that man in there?—I said I'd go right away if you weren't my brother. And you aren't, so—

DYKE. You're going back to your mother?

THE GIRL. Yes.

DYKE. I'm surprised that she sent a girl like you on a sorry errand like this, instead of—

THE GIRL. She's very sick.

DYKE. Oh, that's too bad.

THE GIRL (*twisting her handkerchief*). No, she's not well at all. And most of it's from worrying about Joe.

DYKE. Still, when you tell her that her son isn't a murderer—at least, that he isn't *this* one—that'll comfort her a good deal, won't it?

THE GIRL (*reluctantly*). Yes, I think maybe it will, only—

DYKE. Only what?

THE GIRL. I don't think mother'll ever be *really* well again until she finds out for certain where Joe is and what's become of him.

DYKE (*shakes his head compassionately*). Mothers ought not to be treated like that. I wish I'd treated *mine* better. By the way, you didn't tell me what your name is.

THE GIRL. Josephine Pais.

DYKE (*is suddenly attentive*). Pais? That's an unusual name. I've heard it somewhere, too.

THE GIRL. Just like the name of the city—in France.

DYKE (*knitting his brows*). And your brother's name was Joseph?

THE GIRL. Yes—they used to call us Joe and Josie—that's funny, isn't it?

DYKE (*thoughtfully*). No, I don't think it's so very funny. I rather like it. (*He passes his hand over his forehead as if trying to coerce his memory.*)

THE GIRL. What's the matter?

DYKE (*frowning*). I was thinking of something—now, what on earth was that boy's name! Wait a minute, don't tell me—wait a minute—I've got it! (*He punctuates his triumph with one fist in the palm of the other hand.*) Joseph Anthony Paris!

THE GIRL (*amazed*). Why, that's his name! That's Joel! How did you ever—

DYKE (*his manner is very forcible and convincing*). Wait! Now listen carefully to what I say, and don't interrupt me, because we've only got a minute, and I want you to get this all straight, so you can tell your mother. When the war came along I enlisted and I was overseas for four years—with the Canadians. Early one morning we'd staged a big trench raid, and there was an officer who'd been wounded coming back, and was lying out there in a shell-hole under fire. The Jerries were getting ready for a raid of their own, so they were putting down a box barrage with light guns and howitzers and a few heavies. This officer was lying right in the middle of it. Well, all of a sudden a young fellow dashed out of a trench not far from where I was, and went for that officer. He had to go through a curtain of shells and, more than that, they opened on him with rifles and machine guns. The chances were just about a million to one against him, and he must have known it, but he went out just the same. He got the officer in his arms and started back, but he'd only gone a few yards when a five point nine landed right on top of the two of them. Afterward, we got what was left—the identification tag was still there—and that was the name—Joseph Anthony Paris!

THE GIRL (*carries both hands to her breast*). Oh!

DYKE. If that was your brother's name, then you can tell your mother that he died like a brave man and a soldier, three years ago, in France.

THE GIRL. Joe—my brother Joe—is dead?

DYKE. On the field of battle. It was one of the wonderful, heroic things that went almost unnoticed, as so many of them did. If an officer had seen it, there'd have been a decoration for your mother to keep and remember him by.

THE GIRL. And you were there—and saw it?

DYKE. I was there and saw it. It was three years ago. That's why you and your mother haven't heard from him. And if you don't believe what I've said, why, you just write up to Ottawa and get the official record. Of course (*he shrugs his shoulders contemptuously*) those records are in terribly poor shape, but at least they can tell you what battalion he fought with, when he went overseas. Only you mustn't be surprised no matter whether they say he was killed in action, or died of wounds, or is missing, or even went through the whole war with his outfit, and was honorably discharged. They really don't know what happened to half the men. But I've told you the truth. And it certainly ought to make your mother happy when she knows that her boy died as a soldier, and not as a criminal.

THE GIRL (*is transfigured*). Yes, yes, it will!

DYKE. And does it make you happy, too?

THE GIRL (*nods repeatedly*). Yes. So happy—after what we were both afraid of—I can't even cry—yet. (*She brushes her eyes with her handkerchief.*) I can hardly wait to take it to her.

DYKE (*struck by a sudden inspiration*). I want to give you something else to take to her. (*He picks up from the desk the envelope containing the Liberty Bonds and seals it.*) I want you to give this to your mother from me. Tell her it's from a man who was at Vimy Ridge and saw your brother die, so it's a sort of memorial for him. (*He touches her arm as she absently begins to tear open the envelope.*) No, don't you open it—let her do it.

THE GIRL. What is it? Can't I know?

DYKE. Never mind now, but give it to her. It's all I've got in the world and it's too late now for me to do anything else with it. And have your mother buy a little gold star to wear for her son—and you get one, too, and wear it—here— (*He touches his heart.*) Will you?

THE GIRL. Yes—I will. And yet somehow I'll almost feel that I'm wearing it for you, too.

DYKE (*shakes his head soberly*). Oh, no! You mustn't ever do that. I'm not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with a boy like your brother, and now I'm afraid it is time for you to go. I'm sorry, but—you'd better. I'm glad you came before it was too late, though.

THE GIRL (*gives him her hand*). Good-bye, and thank you. You've done more for me—and mother—than I could possibly tell you. And—and I'm so sorry for you—so *truly sorry*—I wish I could only do something to make you a tiny bit happier, too. Is there anything I could do?

DYKE (*stares at her and by degrees he becomes wistful*). Why—yes, there is. Only I— (*He leaves the sentence uncompleted.*)

THE GIRL. What is it?

DYKE (*looks away*). I can't tell you. I never should have let myself think of it.

THE GIRL. Please tell me. I want you to. For—for Joe's sake, tell me what I can do.

DYKE (*his voice is low and desolate*). Well—in all the months I've been in this hideous place, you're the first girl I've seen. I didn't ever expect to see one again. I'd forgotten how much like angels women look. I've been terribly lonesome tonight, especially, and if you really do want to do something for me—for your brother's sake—you see, you're going to leave me in just a minute and—and I haven't any sister of my own, or anybody else, to say good-bye to me—so, if you could—really say good-bye— (*She gazes at him for a moment, understands, flushes, and then slowly moves into his outstretched arms. He holds her close to him, touches his lips to her forehead twice, and releases her.*)

DYKE (*thickly*). Good-bye, my dear.

THE GIRL. Good night. (*She endeavors to smile, but her voice catches in her throat.*) Good-bye.

DYKE (*impulsively*). What is it?

THE GIRL (*shakes her head*). N-nothing.

DYKE. Nothing?

THE GIRL (*clutches her handkerchief tight in her palm*). I was thinking—I was thinking what I used to say to my brother—for good night. (*She very nearly breaks down.*) If I only could have—have said it to him just once more—for good-bye.

DYKE. What was it?

THE GIRL. I—I told it to you once, and you said it was silly.

DYKE (softly). Say it again

THE GIRL (she cannot quite control her voice).

Good-night, good-night, parting is such sweet sorrow  
That I shall say good-night till it be morrow.

(She goes uncertainly toward the anteroom, hesitates, almost turns back, and then with a choking sob she hurries through the door and closes it behind her. For several seconds DYKE stands rigidly intent upon that door; until at length, without changing his attitude or his expression, he speaks very tenderly and reminiscently.)

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast;  
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest.

(The WARDEN and FATHER DALY come in quietly from the Deputy's room; and as they behold DYKE, how rapt and unconscious of them he is, they look at each other, questioningly. The WARDEN glances at the clock and makes as though to interrupt DYKE's solitary reflections but FATHER DALY quietly restrains him.

The CHAPLAIN sits down in one of the chairs at the back wall; the WARDEN crosses on tip-toe and sits at his desk; he is excessively nervous and he continually refers to the clock. DYKE turns, as though unwillingly, from the door; there are depths in his eyes, and his thoughts are evidently far away. He sits in the chair to the right of the WARDEN's desk and leans outward, his right hand on his knee. He puts his left hand to his throat as though to protect it from a sudden pain. He gazes straight ahead into the unknown and speaks in reverie.)

Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,  
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;  
Seeing that death, a necessary end,  
Will come when it will come.

(He stops and muses for a time, while the WARDEN glances perplexedly at FATHER DALY to discover if the priest can interpret what DYKE is saying. FATHER DALY shakes his head. Abruptly DYKE's face is illumined by a new and welcome recollection; and again he speaks, while the WARDEN tries in vain to comprehend him.)

Cowards die many times before their death;  
The valiant never taste of death but once.

(He stops again and shudders a trifle; his head droops and he repeats, barely above a whisper.)

The valiant never taste of death but once.

(The nearer door on the right is opened noiselessly and the JAILER, in obedience to his instructions, steps just inside the room and stands there mute. FATHER DALY and the WARDEN glance at the JAILER, and with significance at each other, and both rise, tardily. The WARDEN's hand, as it rests on his desk is seen to tremble. There is a moment of dead silence; presently DYKE lifts his head and catches sight of the motionless ATTENDANT at the open door. With a quick intake of his breath, he starts half out of his seat and stares, fascinated; he sinks back slowly, and turns his head to gaze first at FATHER DALY and then at the WARDEN. The WARDEN averts his eyes, but FATHER DALY's expression is of supreme pity and encouragement. Involuntarily, DYKE's hand again goes creeping upward toward his throat, but he arrests it. He grasps the arms of his chair and braces himself; he rises then, and stands very erect, in almost the position of a soldier at attention.)

THE WARDEN (swallows hard). Dyke!

FATHER DALY (brushes past the WARDEN, his right hand lifted as though in benediction). My son!

DYKE (regards them fixedly; his voice is low and steady). All right, let's go.

(He faces about, and with his head held proud and high, and his shoulders squared to the world, he moves slowly toward



the open door. FATHER DALY, with the light of his calling in his eyes, steps in line just ahead of DYKE. The WARDEN, his mouth set hard, falls in behind. When they have all gone forward a pace or two, FATHER DALY begins to speak, and DYKE to reply; FATHER DALY's voice is strong and sweet; and DYKE speaks just after him, not mechanically, but in brave and unfaltering response.)

FATHER DALY. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills—"

DYKE. "The valiant never taste of death but once."

FATHER DALY. "From whence cometh my help."

DYKE. "The valiant never taste of death but once."

FATHER DALY (has almost reached the door; his voice rises a semi-tone, and gains in emotion). "My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth."

DYKE. "The valiant never taste of death—but once."

(When the WARDEN, whose hands are tightly clenched, has passed the threshold, the JAILER follows and closes the door behind him. There is a very brief pause and then

CURTAIN

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